

MAY 6, 1999
FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

PART I

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT
APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

MAY 6, 1999
FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

(Standard Form 424 rev. 4-88)

MAY 6, 1999
FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

PART II

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT

BUDGET FORM AND INFORMATION

MAY 6, 1999
FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

(Standard Form 524)

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

APPLICATION CONTENTS CHECKLIST

Area	Information to be included	Checklist
Cover page	SF 424	
Budget form	ED Form 524 Itemized budget & other budget information	
SEC.2253(b)(2)(A)	The application must contain an assurance that the Governor of the State, in consultation with the State educational agency, has established the required reading and literacy partnership. The application must also a description of how such partnership assisted in the development of the State plan; (i) will be involved in advising on the selection of Local Reading Improvement and tutorial Assistance; and (ii) will assist in the oversight and evaluation of the subgrantees	B.1.a
SEC.2253(b)(2)(B)	Each application must contain a description of the following: (i) How the State educational agency will ensure that professional development activities related to reading instruction and provided under this part are (a) coordinated with other State and local level funds and used effectively to improve instructional practices for reading and (b) based on scientifically based reading research. (ii) How the activities assisted under this part will address the needs of teachers and other instructional staff, and will effectively teach students to read. (iii) The extent to which the activities will prepare teachers in all major components of reading instruction (including phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension) (iv) How the State educational agency will use technology to enhance reading and literacy professional development activities for teachers, as appropriate. (v) How parents can participate in literacy-related activities assisted under this part to enhance their children's reading. (vi) How subgrants made by the State educational agency will meet the requirement of the law, including how the State educational agency will ensure that subgrantees will use practices based on scientifically based reading research. (vii) How the State educational agency will, to the extent practicable, make grants to subgrantees in both rural and urban areas. (viii) The process that the State used to establish the required reading and literacy partnership.	(a) B.1.b B.1.c (b) B.2 B.3 B.4.a B.4.b C.1.a C.1.b C.2 A.5.a.7 A.5.e.2 A.5.e C-2 B.5 C.3 B.4b C.4.b C.4.c C.4.d B.1.a
SEC.2253(b)(2)(C)	Each application must contain an assurance that each local educational agency to which the State educational agency makes a subgrant – (i) Will provide professional development for the classroom teacher and other appropriate instructional staff on the teaching of reading based on scientifically based reading research. (ii) Will provide family literacy services based on programs such as the Even Start family literacy model authorized under part B of title I, to enable parents to be their child's first and most important teacher.	(I) C.1.a (II) A.5.a.3 subgrant application B.1.c B.5

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

APPLICATION CONTENTS CHECKLIST (CONT.)

SEC.2253(b)(2)(C) (Continued)	(iii) Will carry out programs to assist those kindergarten students who are not ready for the transition to first grade, particularly students experiencing difficulty with reading skills; and will use supervised individuals (including tutors), who have been appropriately trained using scientifically based reading research, to provide additional support before school, after school, on weekends, during non-instructional periods of the school day, or during the summer, for children preparing to enter kindergarten and students in kindergarten through grade 3 who are experiencing difficulty reading.	A.5.d.5 B.5.d.5 A.5.e.2 A.5.e.3 B.3
SEC.2253(b)(2)(D)	Each application must contain an assurance that instruction in reading will be provided to children with reading difficulties who – (i) Are at risk of being referred to special education based on these difficulties; or (ii) Have been evaluated under section 614 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act but, in accordance with section 614(b)(5) of such Act, have not been identified as being a child with a disability (as defined in section 602 of the such Act.)	B.4.a. A.5.e.6. LEA Application
SEC.2253(b)(2)(E)	Each application must contain a description of how the State educational agency will build on, and promote coordination among, literacy programs in the State (including federally funded programs such as the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), in order to increase – (i) The effectiveness of the programs in improving reading for adults and children and to avoid duplication of the efforts of the programs; (ii) Will promote reading and library programs that provide access to engaging reading material; (iii) Will make eligible local educational agencies the availability of Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance Subgrants; and (iv) Will assess and evaluate, on a regular basis, local educational agency activities supported by the Reading excellence Act.	B.1.b C.1.c A.5. C.4 F.
SEC.2253b)(2)(F)	Each application must contain a description of the evaluation instrument the State educational agency will use for the required evaluation for the program.	F.
Proposed subgranting process	SEA must include: (i) A copy of the proposed LEA subgrant application (ii) A description of the SEA's review process, including selection criteria	C.4 C.4.a.
GEPA	Description of compliance with the General Education Provisions Act, Section 427.	
Assurances and certifications	Assurance – Non-Construction Program Assurances Certifications: Lobbying; Debarment; Suspension and Other Responsibility Matter; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements	
Electronic submission	Remember to send with a return request receipt.	

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

	Did you send the forms that require original signatures?	
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MAY 6, 1999
FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

PART III

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A.	Significance of Florida's Reading Excellence Grant	1
A.1.	Introduction.....	1
A.2.	Illiteracy: A National Crisis	2
A.3.	Florida: A Key State in Reading Excellence.....	2
A.4.	Current Florida Efforts in Early Literacy and Reading	4
A.5.	Florida's Comprehensive Program for Reading Excellence	7
A.5.a.	– Coordination.....	7
A.5.b.	– LEA Grants	9
A.5.c.	– Systems Changes	10
A.5.d.	– Professional Development and Technical Assistance.....	10
A.5.e.	– Product Development	11
A.5.f.	– Research and Evaluation	12
B.	Reading Excellence Grant Project Design.....	14
B.1.	Coordination	14
B.1.a.	Coordination through Florida's Reading and Family Literacy Partnership.....	14
B.1.b.	Coordination Efforts Between Existing and Newly Established Services.....	21
B.1.c.	Coordination with Family Literacy and Adult Education	24
B.2.	Current Research and Effective Practice in Literacy and Reading	25
B.3.	Research Design for Using Scientifically Based Research on Reading and Literacy.....	27
B.4.	Comprehensive Effort to Improve Teaching and Learning and Support Rigorous Academic Standards	32
B.4.a.	Effort to Improve Teaching and Learning	32
B.4.b.	Effort to Support Rigorous Academic Standards for Students	36
B.5.	Parent and Community Involvement.....	38
C.	Reading Excellence Grant Project Services.....	41
C.1.	Training and Professional Development Services.....	41
C.1.a.	Professional Development Services	41
C.1.b.	Preparing Teachers in all Major Components of Reading Instruction	43
C.1.c.	Library/Media Services.	46
C.2.	Technical Assistance Services.....	47
C.3.	Use of Up-To-Date Research and Effective Practices.....	48
C.4.	Appropriateness of Services for Targeted Populations	49
C.4.a.	LEA Subgrant Application and Process.....	49
C.4.b.	Appropriateness	61
C.4.c.	Diversity of LEAs and Schools Served	61
C.4.d.	Equal Access and Treatment	61
C.5.	Collaboration of Partners	61
D.	Reading Excellence Grant Resources.....	62
E.	Reading Excellence Grant Management Plan	62
F.	Reading Excellence Grant Project Evaluation	63
F.1.	Evaluation Questions	64
F.2.	Research Design	64
F.3.	Data Collection.....	64
F.4.	Data Analysis	65
F.5.	Reporting	66
F.6.	Dissemination of Results	66
F.7.	Use of Objective Performance Measures.....	66
F.8.	Performance Feedback and Periodic Assessment of Progress.....	67
F.9.	Evaluation Instrument	67
G.	Reading Excellence Grant Assurances.....	68
H.	Reading Excellence Grant Description and Assurances on Coordination with Literacy Programs	70
I.	Competitive Priority	71

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

The program narrative follows the format of the selection criteria listed in the Reading Excellence Application. Therefore there will be some repetition, however, efforts were made to avoid redundancy whenever possible.

A. SIGNIFICANCE OF FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT

In this section, we outline the significance of the literacy problem with special attention to issues that present particular challenges for the State of Florida. Among these issues, the number of children living below the national poverty level, the range of cultural and ethnic diversity among school children, and the large numbers of children who enter school without proficiency in the English language make the literacy challenge in Florida particularly noteworthy. Also described in this section are some of Florida's special programs to meet the literacy challenge, and we detail a new state-wide literacy initiative undertaken in response to both local concerns and the present federal legislation.

A.1. INTRODUCTION

confusion
depression
fear
anxiety
anger
acting out.....

All of these emotions are experienced by children and adults who cannot read. The personal embarrassment and frustration coexist in non-readers with increased knowledge that they cannot compete in the school environment or vie for challenging work experiences. The national toll that illiteracy takes on the productivity of our nation is paralleled with hundreds of thousands of personal tragedies stemming from the failure to learn to read. In Florida, many children do not learn to read before the third grade, and more than 25% of the adult population statewide cannot read basic signs or maps, complete simple forms, or carry out many of the tasks required of an adult in our society.

This major problem facing our nation is interwoven with the problems of poverty and a myriad of at-risk behaviors. It is a cycle that, left unbroken, results in wasted human potential in personal lives and the workplace: illiterate parents raise children in language-limited, poor environments that further contribute to illiteracy in their children.

Recent research has demonstrated that this cycle of illiteracy can be broken. The Report of the National Research Council, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (1998), documents many successful strategies for ensuring early literacy development and advocates primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention efforts. Florida embraces the results of the National Research Council and has already begun implementation of some of the recommendations contained in the Report and in other scientifically based research on reading and literacy.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

A.2. ILLITERACY: A NATIONAL CRISIS

Despite more than a century of universal education in the United States, 23% or 40 to 44 million adults in the U.S. perform at Level 1, the lowest of five levels of reading, and 75% of the unemployed are non-readers (National Adult Literacy Survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, September, 1993). Nationally, in 1995-96, 5.6 million children (ages 0 to 21) or about 12% of public school children were enrolled in special education programs. Reading scores on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) 1998 report demonstrate that for grade 4, no significant changes since 1992 were observed in the percentages of students attaining any of the reading levels. The consequences of these crying deficits ripple across the country. Many leading U.S. employers such as Motorola, IBM, and Texas Instruments, decry the lack of basic skills of the graduating students from high schools and have established their own training programs to teach basic reading and mathematics skills to employees so that they can function on the job.

On a national level, concern about the problems and issues of poor reading levels and illiteracy has galvanized Congress to take action. P.L. 105-277, the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, was signed into law on October 21, 1998. It amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to add the Reading Excellence Act in Title II as Part C. The purpose of the Reading Excellence Act is to provide children with the readiness skills and support they need in early childhood to learn to read once they enter school; teach every child to read by the end of the third grade; and improve the instructional practices of teachers and other instructional staff in elementary schools. The act will support four key activities: (1) professional development, (2) out-of-school tutoring, (3) family literacy, and (4) transition programs.

For fiscal year 1999, the U.S. Department of Education will award funds in the amount of \$241.1 million for state grants from the \$260 million appropriated by Congress under the Reading Excellence Grant Program. The Secretary of Education is authorized to make competitive grants to State Educational Agencies (SEAs). The SEAs that receive funding will then make two kinds of subgrants on a competitive basis to high-poverty local education agencies (LEAs) — Local Reading Improvement subgrants and Tutorial Assistance subgrants. Grants will be awarded for two years. States will have three years to spend the funds.

Florida submits this application for the Reading Excellence Grant Program to further its ongoing efforts to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy, and improve the early literacy and reading instruction provided to children and families across the state.

A.3. FLORIDA: A KEY STATE IN READING EXCELLENCE

Florida is in a select position nationally to make major impacts on large numbers of children in high poverty areas.

- ◆ **Total Population.** As the fourth largest state in the nation, in 1998 Florida's kindergarten-to-grade 12 total student population was 2,294,106. Florida has over 785,000 children enrolled in prekindergarten to third grade who are the primary targets for early literacy and reading efforts. Florida has 7 of the 25 largest school districts in the nation, each with a student enrollment of

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

more than 100,000 (Miami-Dade County School District (Miami), Broward County School

District (Ft. Lauderdale), Orange County School District (Orlando), Hillsborough County School District (Tampa), Pinellas County School District (St.Petersburg), Palm Beach County School District (Palm Beach), and Duval County School District (Jacksonville). Efforts to improve early literacy and reading in Florida will impact many children. Florida also has many small rural districts with total student populations of less than 1,600 (Lafayette with 1,073; Liberty with 1,268 and Franklin with 1,508.) Hendry, Hamilton, Gilchrist, Calhoun, and Dixie all have total student populations that hover around 2,000 – 2,500 students. These, small, rural districts have their own set of problems that include difficulty for teachers to attend university classes, lack of opportunities to observe demonstrations of teaching models and the availability of district staff to assist them.

- ◆ **Poverty Levels.** In Florida, 24% of the children live below the national poverty level (Florida Kids Count, 1995). Statewide, the percentage of children participating in the Free or Reduced Price Lunch Program is 53%. Many of the larger school districts (including the Miami, Orlando, Tampa, Fort Lauderdale, Jacksonville, and Pensacola areas) have extensive neighborhoods of high poverty resulting in neighborhood schools with high poverty levels. More than 71,000 elementary children across the state are served in Florida's Title I program. Efforts to improve early literacy and reading in Florida will impact many children living in poverty.
- ◆ **Population Diversity.** Between 1977 and 1998 the minority diversity of the state increased from 30% to a total of 45% statewide. As displayed below, the fastest growth rate is among the Hispanic population that increased from 6.5% of the total Florida population in 1977 to 17% in 1998. Efforts to improve early literacy and reading in Florida will impact many children from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds and cultures.

Racial/Ethnic Category	1977	1998
White non-Hispanic	69.9%	54.9%
African American	23.0%	25.2%
Hispanic	6.5%	17.0%
Total Minority Population	30.0%	45.1%

- ◆ **Limited English Proficiency.** Florida ranks third nationally in the percentage of foreign-born children in public schools and the percentage of children in schools with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Since 1992, Florida's LEP population has grown close to 80%. Statewide, more than 243,000 students, whose heritage language is other than English, receive instruction through the English for Speakers of Other Languages and Dual Language programs. LEP students compose 10% of the state's total K-12 student enrollment. In Miami-Dade County School District alone 22% of the children speak a primary language other than English, and the district has a minority rate of over 87% of the more than 200,000 students. The majority of the LEP students are in grades K-3, crucial ages for early literacy and reading development both in English and their heritage languages. Efforts to improve early literacy and reading in Florida will impact on many children with Limited English Proficiency. Florida is in a special position nationally to study the effectiveness of reading and early literacy programs with Limited English Proficiency populations because of its high population and high regional density of students served through this program.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

- ◆ **Special Populations.** As a result of Florida's large and growing population, the state has high numbers of children with special learning problems and ranks sixth in the nation in the percent of disabled students, birth to twenty-one. Statewide, more than 145,000 children are enrolled in programs for Special Learning Disabilities, 30,000 children participate in programs for language impaired, 55,000 children receive services through programs for speech impairments, and 6,200 children are identified as developmentally delayed. Nationally, Florida ranks seventh in placement of children in special education programs for a total of 418,376 children. Florida also serves more than 53,000 migrant students. These children need consistent, scientifically based reading instruction to maximize their learning under the difficult circumstances of persistent family upheaval. Dr. Michael B Resnick, (University of Florida) in a presentation for the State Council for Early Childhood Services stated that in Florida "between 1991-1996, by third grade approximately 1 of 6 students is labeled ESE. In third, fourth, and fifth grade approximately 1 of five poverty students is in ESE in contrast to approximately 1 of 7 non-poverty students. In third, fourth, and fifth grade, approximately 1 out of 4 poverty male students is in ESE in contrast to approximately 1 of 11 non-poverty females." Efforts to improve early literacy and reading in Florida will impact many children with special learning needs, thus intervening prior to the need for placement in special education programs.
- ◆ **Structure of School Districts.** Florida's structure for school districts is unusual in the nation. School district lines are isomorphic with the geographical boundaries for counties. As a result, there are only 67 school districts for the more than 2.3 million students served in the state. This setting facilitates quick and consistent dissemination of information, training programs, and innovations throughout the state.

Florida's special position as a very large state with a growing foreign-born population and high poverty areas provides an excellent opportunity to maximize the impact of the committed resources under the Reading Excellence Grant Program. Combining these resources with the anticipated state's commitment of \$15 million from the 1999 Legislature in additional resources dedicated to improving reading programs in public education will result in extensive improvements in reading levels of at-risk children and all children living in poverty in the state.

A.4. CURRENT FLORIDA EFFORTS IN EARLY LITERACY AND READING

Commitment to generating stronger early literacy and reading levels in Florida begins at the very top of State Government. Governor Jeb Bush has made reading excellence a top priority with the A+ Plan for Education. He continues personally to tutor students in a local public school on a regular basis and has first-hand knowledge of the problems and frustrations caused by the failure of the education system to ensure every child is reading by the third grade. The Lieutenant Governor, Frank Brogan, is the former Commissioner of Education for Florida and is a strong supporter of reading excellence and the use of scientifically-based research on effective reading instruction in Florida's public school classrooms. The current Commissioner of Education, Tom Gallagher, has launched a new initiative to improve reading scores with plans for the inception of the Florida Reading and Literacy Center and a \$15 million Reading Improvement Initiative.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

In addition to the strong leadership for reading excellence provided by the top government executives, Florida has already taken these recent key steps toward improving the levels of early literacy and reading for Florida's children:

- ◆ **Teacher Certification.** Florida changed the certification requirements for elementary school teachers to add a three credit hour requirement in "methods and materials for teaching reading at the elementary or primary level to include each of the following:
 1. Sequential developmental skills and concepts of reading
 2. Recognition and diagnosis of reading problems
 3. Prescription and utilization of appropriate methods and materials to increase reading performance."
- ◆ **Florida Center for Reading and Family Literacy.** Through a combination of funding sources, Florida is initiating the establishment of a Reading and Family Literacy Center expanding on the concepts of the successful Texas Center. The Florida Center for Reading and Family Literacy will serve as a clearinghouse for information on scientifically based reading and family literacy research, a lighthouse for disseminating information on successful projects, a research/development center to document effective practices based on rigorous research methods, and a development center for teacher training modules.
- ◆ **State Reading Improvement Grants.** In school year 1998-99, the Florida Legislature allocated \$10 million for reading improvement grants that were disseminated to all 67 school districts. These grants are in full implementation with evaluation results to be available by December 1999.
- ◆ **State Goals and Standards-Driven Instruction.** Florida has been a national leader in establishing goals for education and moving public schools to a standards-driven educational system. Relevant state goals are:
 - **Goal 1 – Readiness to Start School:** Communities and schools collaborate to prepare children and families for children's success in school.
 - **Goal 3 – Student Performance:** Students successfully compete at the highest levels nationally and internationally and are prepared to make well-reasoned, thoughtful, and healthy lifelong decisions.
 - **Goal 6 – Teachers and Staff:** The schools, districts, colleges of education, postsecondary institutions, and state ensure professional teachers and staff.
 - **Goal 7 – Adult Literacy:** Adult Floridians are literate and have the knowledge and skills needed to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
 - **Goal 8 – Parental Involvement:** Communities, school boards, and schools provide opportunities for involving parents and guardians as active partners in achieving school improvement and education accountability.

At the heart of Florida's school improvement efforts is a standards-driven curriculum that includes strands, standards and benchmarks by subject and grade clusters. Standards are assessed both at the classroom level by teachers and through a statewide assessment. Trainers are available to assist district personnel in implementing the standards and aligning them with local curriculum.

- ◆ **Statewide Student Assessment Program.** Florida has had a statewide student assessment program for more than two decades. The reading/communications section of the current Florida Comprehensive Assessment Program (FCAT) is administered in all public schools at the 4th, 8th, and 10th grade levels, and provides classroom and school level results on which to compare

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

reading scores with and across schools. It will serve as an excellent consistent outcome measure for the long-range evaluation of the impact of the Reading Excellence Grants awarded to LEAs.

- ◆ **Reductions in Social Promotions.** Another factor influencing the strong emphasis on reading in Florida resulted from legislation passed two years ago that amended Florida Statutes to limit social promotions by requiring “each student’s progression from one grade to another to be determined, in part, upon proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics....” The same legislation also states, “If the student’s reading deficiency, as determined by the locally determined assessment, is not remedied by the end of grade 2 or 3, or if the student scores below the specific level of performance, determined by the local school board, on the statewide assessment test in reading and writing given in elementary school, the student must be retained.”
- ◆ **Statewide Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services.** The Council was established more than a decade ago to ensure coordination at the local level among the various agencies and programs serving preschool children. The purpose of the Council is to support school districts’ efforts to achieve the first state education goal, readiness to start school; to facilitate communication, cooperation, and maximum use of resources; and to promote high standards for all programs serving preschool children in Florida.
- ◆ **Even Start Family Literacy.** Florida received and expended over \$5 million in FY98 for this program through which efforts are made to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of low-income families. The program integrates early childhood education and parenting education into a unified family literacy program that is implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing resources. A total of 30 projects have been funded in Florida impacting on 2,945 children and 1,729 families since its inception in 1989.
- ◆ **Title I/Migrant Education.** The Title I program improves educational opportunities for educationally deprived children by helping them succeed in regular school programs, attain grade level proficiency, improve in basic and more advanced skills, and progress to the same high standards as other children. Both the Title I Basic and the Migrant Education Programs provide participating children the opportunity to meet the same challenging state student performance standards required of all other students. In addition, the SEA ensures that each approved Title I Basic and Migrant project application for funds addresses reading if district test scores identify reading as a weakness.
- ◆ **Office of School Improvement.** At the state level, multiple fund sources are used to support this technical assistance unit that coordinates teams designed to work with the regions and regional offices in improving student performance. A major focus of their efforts in elementary schools has been to help schools conduct needs assessments and use the results in implementing school improvement activities. They have also been instrumental in assisting local schools in comprehensive school reform efforts.
- ◆ **Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services.** This Bureau’s primary activities are targeted to providing services for students in special education. Most of Florida’s Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students receive the majority of their education in general education classrooms. The state has expanded the emphasis in training and technical assistance materials to focus on all teachers, not only ESE teachers. By providing all teachers with increased and improved tools for instructing students who do not respond well to traditional instruction, the Bureau aids teachers in using the tools to instruct any student having difficulty, thus preventing deficits in reading and other subjects before they begin. A few of the many training and resource development efforts

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

include: Effective Instructional Practices (Cadre of Trainers), Assessment and Instruction in

Phonological Awareness (a product providing basic information), Curriculum Based Assessment/Measurement (Statewide training and model sites).

- ◆ **Technology Literacy.** In 1999, as part of Florida's Technology Literacy Challenge Fund initiative, reading projects were listed as a priority. These awards will be made in June 1999. In addition, a Reading Best Practices CD-Rom was developed through a collaborative effort of educators and a private company that will be distributed to all schools, district office curriculum support staff, and Florida's Area Centers for Education Enhancement for the 1999-2000 school year.

Despite these efforts, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), reading assessment scores in Florida elementary schools have not increased in the past six years. The average fourth grade NAEP scale scores in reading for Florida were:

Year	NAEP Scale Score
1992	208
1994	205
1998	207

These results place Florida below the national average on the NAEP and give greater urgency to the need in Florida for improving the efforts in reading instruction and basing these efforts on scientifically based reading research conducted through the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures.

A.5. FLORIDA'S COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR READING EXCELLENCE

The Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership has formulated a Comprehensive Initiative for sponsoring and enhancing reading and family literacy efforts based on scientifically rigorous reading research and the recommendations of the National Research Council. This Initiative has been titled "**Family Literacy and Reading Excellence**" or **FLaRE**. The **FLaRE** Initiative will be a coordinated, comprehensive effort consisting of these major activities supported through the Reading Excellence Grant. The descriptions that follow will be grouped into six components. They are as follows:

- A.5.A. - COORDINATION
- A.5.B. - LEA GRANTS
- A.5.C. - SYSTEMS CHANGES
- A.5.D. - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
- A.5.E. - PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT
- A.5.F. - RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

A.5.A. – COORDINATION

1. **Expansion of the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership Role.** Florida will continue its commitment to excellence in reading and family literacy through semi-annual meetings of the 22-member Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership. The role of the Partnership has been expanded beyond the grant to include providing critical input into the entire statewide Reading Initiative sponsored by the Governor.
2. **Statewide Reading and Family Literacy Summit.** The Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership will sponsor a Reading and Family Literacy Summit keynoted by the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Commissioner of Education. The summit will bring to all

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

Florida school districts the latest scientifically based reading research, serve as a forum for dissemination of new methods and products to improve reading instruction at all levels from

birth to adulthood, and focus statewide attention of all citizens on issues and effective programs for ensuring all children learn to read by the end of Grade Three.

3. **Statewide Preparation Workshop.** Prior to awarding grants, the Florida DOE will hold a statewide preparation workshop for eligible LEAs to bring greater understanding of the need for implementing scientifically based reading research, the emphasis of the grants on effective family literacy approaches such as the Keenan model used in Even Start, and specific programs based in rigorous research methods that are effective in teaching reading and family literacy.
4. **Collaboration with the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Center for Materials Development.** The Partnership and Florida DOE will work closely with the anticipated Florida Reading and Family Literacy Center (funded out of multiple fund sources) to develop and disseminate materials and products for use by the LEA grantees. A concise document will be developed to guide districts throughout Florida in the development and implementation of a balanced, comprehensive reading program in prekindergarten through grade three that reflects scientifically based reading research. Nationally renown experts in reading research located in Florida, such as Dr. Joseph Torgesen and Dr. Barbara Palmer of Florida State University, will be asked to assist in creating this research-based document. The guide will build upon and expand the documents generated in California and Texas. It will provide discussion of the essential components of effective reading instruction as they are currently understood, as well as specification of the features of classrooms and school campuses that support effective beginning reading instruction.
5. **Florida DOE FLaRE Coordinator.** The Florida DOE will establish a grant funded position at the state level to provide support to district and school level personnel in identifying and implementing reading and family literacy programs and instructional strategies that are based on rigorous scientific research. The position, located in the Bureau of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, will provide coordination and dissemination of reading and family research and programs throughout the various state, regional, and local agencies that serve children at risk of developing problems in learning to read and serve as the coordinating staff to the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership. The position will also be responsible for processing LEA applications and coordinating the approval process.
6. **FLaRE Regional Forums.** Up to five **FLaRE** regional forums will be held each year for all grant recipients. These forums will facilitate networking among funded projects about effective strategies, inform grantees about products and programs available for technical assistance, and provide a platform for individual projects to share their successes.
7. **On-line Information from the Florida DOE.** The Florida DOE will provide information through the Internet on scientifically based reading research that can be used by funded LEA grants and others in revising curriculum and instructional strategies for reading and family literacy programs. Florida's extensive Florida Information Resource Network (FIRN) system connects every school district, most schools, and many teachers directly with the DOE. This electronic system affords an inexpensive and virtually real-time delivery method to keep all interested parties informed.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

A.5.B. – LEA GRANTS

1. **LEA Subgrants in Reading/Family Literacy.** The Florida DOE will award to eligible LEAs on a competitive basis subgrants that show promise for development and implementation of a balanced, comprehensive reading and family literacy programs through Grade Three. Funding will only be given to proposals that use scientifically based reading and family literacy research. Additionally, funding will only be given to proposals that certify that they will form a partnership with one or more community-based organizations of demonstrated effectiveness in early childhood literacy, and reading readiness, reading instruction, and reading achievement for both adults and children, such as a Head Start program, family literacy program, public library, or adult education program, to carry out the functions of the grant, or provide information on why it would not have been feasible for the applicant to have done so. Using the eligibility criteria stipulated in the Reading Excellence Act for these grants, Florida anticipates that up to 203 schools in more than 25 school districts (37% of the Florida school districts) will be eligible for these subgrants.
2. **LEA Tutorial Assistance Subgrants (TAG).** The Florida DOE will award to eligible LEAs on a competitive basis subgrants that show promise for development and implementation of programs to provide reading tutoring for children who are having difficulty learning to read. These tutoring programs may be offered before school, after school, on weekends, during periods in the school day that do not conflict with other important instruction (particularly classroom instruction in reading), and during the summer months. Funding will only be given to proposals that use scientifically based reading and family literacy research. Using the eligibility criteria stipulated in the Reading Excellence Act for the TAG subgrants, Florida anticipates that up to 220 schools in more than 27 school districts (40% of the Florida school districts) will be eligible for these grants.
3. **LEA Grant Requirements.** The state will require as a part of the subgrant application, that LEA staff development activities must be consistent with the scientifically based instructional competencies that are reflected in the Florida Education Standards Commission Subject Matter Content Standards for Teachers (discussed later in this proposal) which include Reading (Phonological Awareness, Phonics/Decoding, Fluency, and Comprehension) Writing, Listening, Speaking, Viewing, Language and Technology. The competencies reflect scientifically based reading skills.
4. **LEA Grant Preference.** Preference will be given to districts supporting a coaching, demonstration, mentoring model of staff development at local school sites. Eligible districts and schools will be informed in advance of this preference through the Statewide Preparation Conference, grant application guidelines, grant rating criteria, and e-mail notices to the districts and schools.
5. **Enhance Reading Materials and Book Collections.** Since many districts in Florida have spent large amounts of library money on increasing technology both in the classroom and in school library media centers, some centers may need to perform a critical review of current reading materials and book selections. Florida will encourage the critical review of existing book collections and if needed dedicating resources from their grant to enhancing in-class and library reading materials and book collections. Approved selections should contain acknowledged literary works on a wide spectrum of reading levels.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

6. **Preference for Expanding Library Media Programs.** Preference for subgrants will be given to LEA's and schools committing to expanding library media programs and enhancing reading materials modeled after the Florida Legislative program Extended Access to Libraries Grant Award program.

A.5.C. – SYSTEMS CHANGES

1. **Standards Revision for Teacher Certification.** To strengthen Florida's current requirement that teachers earn three credit hours in Reading, additional subject matter certification will be implemented to include methods reflecting scientifically based reading research.
2. **Textbook Adoption Specifications.** Specifications for the next adoption of reading textbooks will be aligned with the components of an effective, balanced reading program. These specifications are made available to districts to help them evaluate their current materials as well as to orient teachers for the upcoming adoption. The specifications alert publishers of standards that instructional materials must meet to be listed by the Department as state adopted. Districts use this list for selection of instructional materials for the classrooms.

A.5.D. – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

1. **State Supported Professional Development.** A variety of print, web-based, and CD-ROM based materials will be developed by multiple development units for use by the LEA grantees and any other LEAs instructing teachers, school reading specialists, principals, other school staff, and district staff about scientifically based reading research and effective family literacy programs and strategies. These efforts will be coordinated with the newly enacted (1999 Legislature) Florida Teacher Training Institutes as a part of the A+ Plan for Education that will expand technology-based training such as distance learning and Internet-based assistance. Another key component will be the development of a web-based training and technical assistance component to be incorporated into the successful Support for Teachers Enhancing Performance in Schools (STEPS) program located at the University of West Florida.
2. **State Supported Technical Assistance.** All LEA grantees will receive technical assistance including modeling and coaching from the Florida Area Centers for Educational Enhancement, six regional centers for training and technical assistance that specialize in tailoring training and technical assistance to the needs of the local school districts and schools, and from the Office of School Improvement to incorporate new reading instruction programs into the state-mandated School Improvement Plans.
3. **Reading Specialists.** The National Research Council recommends that all K-3 teachers have access to a reading specialist who has specialized knowledge of typical and atypical development of reading, including scientifically based reading and family literacy research, and of the role of the research in supporting reading instruction. The existing six state funded regional Area Centers for Educational Enhancement offices provide Masters degree specialists who can offer coaching/mentoring for teachers in their region. A recent statewide evaluation has documented that this system is especially effective in serving small and rural school districts, many of which will be eligible grant recipients. The DOE will direct the Area Centers to use their expertise in brokering services to assist local districts to procure specialists and consultants with Masters degree specialists in reading and family literacy. Additionally, eligible grant recipients will be encouraged to build into their grants obtaining

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

coaching and mentoring services from various sources to more directly impact on changing teaching behaviors, including the Area Centers, the Region XIV Comprehensive Services Center, and the SERVE educational laboratory funded by the U.S. DOE.

4. **Reading Resource Collection.** Through the existing DOE School Improvement Resource Center Professional Library and the newly established Reading and Family Literacy Center, the Department will develop a Reading and Family Literacy Resource Collection containing scientifically-based reading and family literacy research articles, documents, descriptions of programs with proven evidence of effectiveness, and preview copies of program materials and documents. This resource collection will be made available at no cost to eligible grant recipients and preschools in the eligible districts as the districts and schools plan for their grants, and following funding to grant awardees and their potential community based organizations. Dissemination will include flyers describing the collection, annotated bibliographies of resources in the collection, and direct loans of available materials.
5. **Internet Dissemination and Use.** All Florida school districts and most Florida schools are online with the FIRN system for Internet communication. The DOE will establish a separate Listserv for the funded **FLaRE** projects. New research evidence, information on programs and strategies founded in scientifically based research, and tips and techniques for staff development will be disseminated through FIRN and the Listserv. Current information regarding state-of-the-art kindergarten/first grade transition programs and strategies will also be included.

A.5.E. – PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

1. **Staff Development Program on Reading and Family Literacy.** In collaboration with the DOE, Human Resources Development unit, the proposed Florida Reading and Family Literacy Center will create a staff development program designed specifically to address reading and family literacy that incorporates all the major components of reading instruction, including phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension. The program will be developed in a modular format to assist districts in implementing it in sequential staff development sessions with whole school faculties. The program will be disseminated to all grant recipient district staff development offices through the Reading Excellence Grant, to community based organizations partnering with local school districts, and will be duplicated for use in all Florida districts through other fiscal resources. An electronic version will be made available on the Internet.
2. **Statewide Videoconference Seminars on Reading and Family Literacy.** The DOE will contract with the Panhandle Area Center for Educational Enhancement to conduct statewide videoconference seminars on reading and family literacy for all grant awardees. This center already routinely conducts Teacher Tuesday video conferences to reach teachers in rural areas who cannot easily attend staff development activities. At a minimum, one of these conferences will address kindergarten to first grade transition strategies.
3. **Expand the Support for Teachers Enhancing Performance in Schools (STEPS) program.** To increase access to information on reading and literacy research and implications, the DOE will support development of scientifically based reading research as an integral part of the STEPS program. This program is an Internet-based electronic research and curriculum development tool developed and maintained collaboratively by the Florida Department of Education through its Area Center of Educational Enhancement located at the University of West Florida. One of the areas of focus will be to assist kindergarten teachers implement strategies to assist their students to transition success fully to first grade.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

4. **Introductory Video on Reading/Family Literacy.** In addition, the DOE will develop an introductory video explaining scientifically based reading and family literacy research in at least two languages. The video will last approximately 15 minutes and will present the major new findings presented in the National Research Council's report and the ramifications for classroom instruction.
5. **Preservice and In-service Courses in Reading Research.** As soon as the Reading and Family Literacy Center is established and the Florida Teacher Training Centers (Part of the recently enacted A+ Plan legislation) are operational, Florida will compile a recommended syllabus, annotated bibliography, and course documentation for use at the preservice and inservice levels to train new teachers and returning teachers on the body of knowledge reflected in scientifically based reading and family literacy research. Experts from all of the state Colleges of Education will be represented in this development effort, as well as experts in second language acquisition and literacy development for LEP students. This syllabus will also be provided to the staff development departments of all school districts eligible for grants to incorporate into their staff development programs on reading and family literacy. This effort will be coordinated with the Florida Teacher Preparation Committee that was established by the 1999 Legislature to impact on requirements for teacher preparation.
6. **Florida Early Reading Assessment.** Florida will adopt, adapt or develop a diagnostic instrument to be used by classroom teachers in detecting problems children are having in developing reading proficiency. The instrument will be founded in scientifically based reading research on early reading and literacy skills and will provide statewide consistency in the diagnosis of and early intervention in reading problems. In addition, the diagnostic instrument will assist teachers to determine whether a child needs intensive reading instruction or whether the child needs to be referred for special education evaluation.

A.5.F. – RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

The impact of the instructional improvements to be supported by the grant will be evaluated in the following three ways:

1. **Evaluation of outcomes by local LEAs.** One of the important criteria for awarding both Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance Grants is that the application should contain a sound evaluation plan. We will require districts to assess outcomes using objective measures of reading performance. For pre-school and kindergarten outcomes, these should include, but not be limited to, measures of phonemic awareness, letter-knowledge, and oral language vocabulary. For programs focused on grades 1 through 3, outcomes should include, but not be limited to, ability to comprehend grade level text, facility in application of phonetic knowledge to decoding unfamiliar words, and growth of fluent and accurate identification of known words. We will ask districts to provide information not only on mean levels of performance, but on the distribution of performance levels across children so that numbers of children still remaining seriously behind in reading can be assessed.
2. **Comprehensive evaluation.** A comprehensive evaluation of the **FLaRE** Initiative will be conducted in a private/public collaboration with Evaluation Systems Design, Inc., a Florida-based firm with more than 20 years of experience conducting professional evaluations of innovative education and human services programs across the nation. A detailed specification of the overall evaluation design to be employed by this outside team is found in Section F: Reading Excellence Grant Project Evaluation.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

3. **State supported research on effective reading instruction for LEP students.** One of the critical research needs in the area of early literacy studies, according to the recent NRC report (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998), is more systematic evaluation of outcomes for children with limited English language proficiency. Because of the high numbers of children with limited English proficiency in Florida's schools, Florida has a unique opportunity to study the strength of various literacy approaches with children who vary in their proficiency with the English language at the beginning of instruction. Also, LEP student populations in Florida are more heterogeneous than homogeneous, which provides a greater variety of nationalities, ethnic backgrounds, cultural and socioeconomic levels to be included in the research project, making the study more reflective of national demographically trends and increasing the validity and reliability of the results of the proposed project.

It is also of interest to understand how these children compare to other groups of children in their response to the improved literacy instruction provided by grant supported LEA's. The Florida DOE will work in conjunction with the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Center to bring the involvement of key university researchers with expertise in evaluation, second language acquisition, and reading and literacy for LEP students together to select a rigorous research design and to conduct the study. We anticipate that a planned sampling procedure will be carried out across various grant support sites that will allow description of outcomes under various conditions of both kind and intensity of early reading instruction. It is anticipated that more than 500 LEP students will participate in this special study.

The **FLaRE** Initiative encompasses the multi-pronged approach advocated in the National Research Council's recommendations. Primary prevention is addressed through the **FLaRE** Summit, Regional Forums, and upgrades in teacher certification requirements. Secondary and tertiary prevention is conducted through the Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance grants to LEAs. All of these activities are supported and assisted through professional training and technical assistance provided by the Florida DOE, Florida Center for Reading and Family Literacy, and the regional Area Centers for Educational Enhancement.

The combined, comprehensive **FLaRE** Initiative will build local capacity to provide, improve, and expand services that address the needs of children in poverty across the state and all children at risk of delays in developing reading proficiency. Each strategy identified in the **FLaRE** Initiative will be implemented with and for the targeted LEAs and schools as well as changing the processes and structures impacting reading and family literacy instruction for all schools in the districts and across the state.

These comprehensive **FLaRE** efforts will be supported and guided by the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership. The Partnership will ensure coordination and collaboration among the many groups and organizations that have a vested interest in ensuring literacy for every child and adult in Florida through reading and family literacy efforts based on scientifically rigorous reading research.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

B. READING EXCELLENCE GRANT PROJECT DESIGN

This section describes the overall design of the project, beginning with the role of the Florida Reading and Family Literacy partnership in providing overall direction and guidance. It also describes the way in which activities will be coordinated with ongoing state programs that support literacy efforts, including especially family literacy and adult education programs. This section also describes the conclusions drawn from current scientific research and their impact on reading that will inform all aspects of the project. The conclusions from this research will be disseminated widely to the districts and schools in Florida that serve the highest numbers and proportion of at risk and high poverty children.

B.1. COORDINATION

B.1.A. COORDINATION THROUGH FLORIDA'S READING AND FAMILY LITERACY PARTNERSHIP

Membership and Formation. Florida is fortunate to have a commitment from the highest levels of the state legislature and government to improve significantly the early literacy and reading levels for all children. In March 1999, Florida's Reading and Family Literacy Partnership was formed to provide, at the highest levels of the state, leadership and statewide visibility on the needs and efforts in reading and literacy. The strong support and involvement of the Partnership stems from Florida's ongoing review of student achievement results in our diverse populations that demonstrates the gaps in reading performance and critical need for more concerted efforts to ensure every child can read.

Active members of the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership include the Governor, Jeb Bush; the Lieutenant Governor, Frank Brogan; and the Commissioner of Education, Tom Gallagher. As previously described, all three of these leaders in Florida have made reading excellence a top priority for the state.

Chairs of the Florida House and Senate education committees are also active participants in the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership. Their commitment to quality education in Florida has resulted in major new funding for reading and early childhood programs in this legislative session that will conclude just after submission of the grant application.

Other members of the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership were uniquely selected to represent agencies and organizations that play pivotal roles in educating young children and preparing teachers and staff to develop further skills that facilitate literacy and learning to read. These state leaders will provide dual avenues of communication linking information about programs and resources across the state and sharing with the Partnership the latest successes and challenges experienced by those in direct contact with young children. The Partnership members also offer a conduit of sharing across components of the Reading and Literacy community that often operate in isolation, such as public schools, early childhood centers, and adult literacy programs.

Figure 1 presents the 22 members of the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership and the areas of representation for each member. Members were selected through a nomination process to represent all aspects of the education and child welfare communities, and have made a commitment to contribute their efforts until the goal of reading competency by all Florida children at the end of third grade is achieved. It should be noted that the partnership voted unanimously to include "Family Literacy" in the title of the partnership.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

Florida has chosen to expand the Reading Excellence Act requirement for a Reading and Literacy Partnership into two different groups. In addition to the formal Partnership described herein, Florida has also appointed an in-house working group to participate in the development of the grant application, provide input and assistance to the Partnership as needed and to insure collaborative coordination throughout the development, implementation and evaluation of the grant activities. This working group has met at least four times during the development and writing of the grant to provide input and direction in accordance with leadership provided by the Partnership. A list of the working group with members' affiliations is included in *Figure 1*. This group will be reconstituted into the nucleus of the **FLaRE** Initiative Implementation Committee, which will be expanded to include representation of community and parental interests upon receipt of the grant award. This Committee will continue to function as staff for Florida's Reading and Family Literacy Partnership.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

FIGURE 1

FLORIDA'S READING AND LITERACY PARTNERSHIP

Honorable Jeb Bush
Governor

Ms. Brenda Dickinson, President
Home Education Foundation
(Parent)

Honorable Frank Brogan
Lieutenant Governor

Ms. Laurin MacLeish, Teacher
Lake Silver Elementary School
Orlando, Florida

Honorable Tom Gallagher
Commissioner of Education

Ms. Renee Hotes, President
Florida Literacy Coalition
(Family Literacy Service Provider)

Dr. John Stewart
Deputy Commissioner for Educational Programs
Florida Department of Education

Dr. Melvin Gadson
Dean, College of Education
Florida A & M University

Honorable Anna Cowin, Chair
Florida Senate Education Committee

Dr. John Smith, Superintendent
Marion County School District

Honorable Buddy Dyer, Member
Florida Senate Education Committee

Mrs. Barbara Mainster, Executive Director
Redlands Christian Migrant Association
(Private Nonprofit Provider)

Honorable Evelyn Lynn, Chair
Florida House Academic Excellence Council
(includes all House Education Committees)

Ms. Evelyn Maycumber, Program Development Training
Specialist
North East Florida Educational Consortium
(Adult Education Provider)

Honorable Cynthia Chestnut, Member
Florida House Education Committee

Ms. Carrie King
Volunteer, Pasco County

Dr. Elmer Jenkins, Chair
Escambia County School Board

Ms. Rita Maupin, Library Director
Calhoun County Public Library

Ms. Elaine Darlington-Violano
Chief Executive Officer
Early Childhood Resources
(Community-Based Organization)

Mr. Gerry Miller, Director
Kaplan Learning Services
(Private Service Provider)

Dr. David Mosrie, Director
Division of Public Schools
Florida Department of Education

Mr. Warren Smith, State Director
Corporation for National Service
(Volunteer Organization)

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STAFF TO THE PARTNERSHIP

Mr. Lou Marsh, Policy Analyst

Mr. Wayne Largent, Administrator

MAY 6, 1999
FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

READING EXCELLENCE ACT WORKING COMMITTEE

Mr. Lou Marsh, Co-Chair - Curriculum Reading Services; State-funded reading initiatives

Mr. Wayne Largent, Co-Chair - Goals 2000; Consolidated State Plan

Ms. Betty Coxe, Division Director - Staff Development/Teacher Certification

Dr. Gerald Richardson - Evaluation; Identification of Critically Low Performing Schools and Schools of Excellence

Ms. Andrea Willett - Office of School Improvement

Mr. William Pittman - Title I; Migrant Education

Ms. Patty Ball-Thomas - Early Intervention/Preschool

Ms. Susan Walton - Family Involvement

Ms. Lisa Gale - ESOL; Office of Multicultural and Student Language Education

Dr. Joseph Torgesen, Florida State University, Psychology Department - National expert on Phonological Awareness

Dr. Peter Lenkway - Office of Educational Technology

Dr. Debby Houston - Exceptional Child Education (including gifted)

Ms. Leatrice Williams - Adult and Family Literacy

Ms. Barbara Shapley - Newspapers in Education

Invited others:

Dr. John Wiegman, Chief
Bureau of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Mr. David Ashburn, Deputy Director
Division of Public Schools

Dr. David Mosrie, Director
Division of Public School

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

Mission and Responsibilities of the Partnership. At the first meeting of Florida's Reading and Family Literacy Partnership, the following mission statement was adopted by unanimous consent:

Provide leadership and input into the development of a seamless, coordinated, scientifically-based and balanced approach to reading instruction which will prepare every child in Florida to read at grade level by the end of the third grade in school.

The full membership discussed the issues facing the state in the area of reading and family literacy and agreed on the following responsibilities for the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership:

- ◆ Promoting a coordinated state effort in providing reading and family literacy instruction including state summit meetings on reading and family literacy.
- ◆ Linking current and potential resources in focusing on reading and literacy across child-care providers, higher education institution teacher preparation and early childhood programs, community agencies, and businesses.
- ◆ Promoting regional forums that focus community efforts on reading and family literacy.
- ◆ Identifying barriers to implementing scientifically based reading and family literacy instruction.
- ◆ Reviewing and guiding the state grant activities.
- ◆ Providing guidance in the development of LEA subgrant selection criteria.
- ◆ Appointing a steering committee to serve in a liaison capacity with the Florida Department of Education in grant implementation.

The activities of the Florida Partnership extend beyond the requirements of the Reading Excellence Act. It is the intention of the Governor and the Commissioner of Education that this Partnership will provide input into Florida's overall reading initiatives, thus ensuring that activities undertaken as a part of the Reading Excellence Act are an integral part of the entire statewide reading effort.

Process Used to Establish the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership. *Figure 1* (presented earlier) identifies the 22 members of the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership and the areas of representation for each member. Members were selected through a nomination process to represent all aspects of the education and child welfare communities, and have made a commitment to contribute their efforts until the goal of reading competency by all Florida children at the end of third grade is achieved. Nominated members were reviewed, approved, and appointed by the Commissioner of Education and the Governor. The Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership represents the diversity of the state's population and individuals in key positions to initiate and effect changes in reading and family literacy instruction that further the mission of the Partnership and represent scientifically based reading and family literacy research.

Activities and Resources. Following the grant award, a minimum of two formal meetings of the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership will be held annually to facilitate networking and sharing information across all facets of reading and literacy initiatives in Florida. Additional communication will be facilitated through such activities as tele-conferences using the state of the art DOE teleconference capabilities. E-mail will be used to convey documents and interim management and evaluation reports to all members of the Partnership and continue dialoging on critical issues in reading and literacy for young children and the adults impacting their reading proficiency.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

The Florida Department of Education will serve as staff to and provide resources and support for the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership. Resources available for the partnership will include:

- ◆ paid travel expenses to the meetings of the Partnership
- ◆ all arrangements for the teleconferences
- ◆ coordination and facilitation of e-mail communications
- ◆ distribution of pertinent documents and materials to members
- ◆ printing of materials and documents generated by or endorsed by the Partnership
- ◆ other support as needed by the Partnership

The Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership will sponsor and participate in a Reading and Family Literacy Summit. The Governor, Lt. Governor, and Commissioner of Education will keynote this summit meeting to, as Lt. Governor Frank Brogan has stated, "Give this issue visibility and urgency! We operate from the philosophy that every child can learn to read, should learn to read, and can master reading skills by the end of the third grade." This summit will bring to all Florida school districts the latest scientifically based reading research, serve as a forum for dissemination of new methods and products to improve reading instruction at all levels from birth to adulthood and focus statewide attention of all citizens on issues and effective programs for ensuring all children learn to read by the end of Grade Three.

The Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership will also sponsor up to five **FLaRE** Regional Forums to be held each year to highlight successes in implementing scientifically based reading and literacy efforts and identify barriers to effective implementation and coordination. These forums will facilitate networking among funded projects about effective strategies, inform grantees about products and programs available for technical assistance, and provide a platform for individual projects to share their successes. Members of the Florida Partnership have made commitments to keynote these Reading Excellence Forums and contribute their influence in planning and conducting these opportunities for regional coordination and collaboration. Holding the forums on a regional basis will encourage school staff actively engaged in **FLaRE** grants to participate and benefit from the increased knowledge of scientifically based reading research.

Partnership Assistance in State Plan Development. The Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership has taken an active part in providing essential concepts and guidance on this **FLaRE** State Plan for Reading Excellence. At the initial meeting of the Reading and Family Literacy Partnership, members viewed a presentation describing salient aspects of the legislation and grant program requirements, and participated in identifying factors to use in selecting scientifically based reading research programs for implementation in Florida's schools and target school districts for subgrants. A steering committee was appointed to provide close coordination of the Reading Excellence Grant activities during the state plan development phase. This steering committee consists of the Lieutenant Governor, the Commissioner of Education, the Deputy Commissioner of Education Programs, the dean of one of the state's Colleges of Education, and two members of the state Legislative Education Committees. The full partnership reviewed an initial draft of the grant proposal and provided input into its revision and refinements. Subsequently, the Steering Committee reviewed progressive drafts of the **FLaRE** State Plan and provided ongoing input into the plan as it was developed. The Steering

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

Committee reviewed a final draft of the **FLaRE** State Plan to ensure that it reflected the intent of the full Partnership.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

Advise on Selection of Subgrantees. At the first meeting of the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership, members discussed the selection process for and criteria for selection of the LEA subgrant awards. These concepts were then developed into a formal selection process and criteria for review by the full partnership. All partners participated in the review process and were provided an opportunity to recommend changes in the LEA subgrant selection process and criteria. The LEA subgrant selection process includes inviting partnership members to serve on the LEA subgrant proposal review task force.

Assistance in Oversight and Evaluation of Subgrantee. To ensure statewide consistency in implementation and coordination of the various partners throughout Florida, the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership will provide input and guidance in the implementation phase for **FLaRE** subgrants after proposals are funded. Members of the Partnership will be invited to visit funded projects to witness the successes being accomplished with children. The full Partnership will review reports and summary information gathered by monitoring teams to review subgrantees' implementation of scientifically based research reading programs. These monitoring teams will be coordinated by and through the Florida DOE staff. The full Partnership will coordinate local evaluations of funded **FLaRE** subgrants and coordinate the statewide comprehensive evaluation for each funding year to include years one and two, and a final comprehensive evaluation at the conclusion of year three of funding.

B.1.B. COORDINATION EFFORTS BETWEEN EXISTING AND NEWLY ESTABLISHED SERVICES

The Partnership, in conjunction with the **FLaRE** Initiative Implementation Committee, will coordinate the efforts of the **FLaRE** Initiative with similar and related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State and federal resources. *Figure 2* presents a schematic of the major agencies and organizations providing a continuum of services and programs for at-risk pregnant women, at-risk infants and children, and their families. At its semi-annual meetings, the Partnership will hear reports concerning new efforts from these varied areas, address issues and concerns related to collaboration and cooperation, and work cooperatively as a group to reduce the barriers to implementing scientifically based reading and family literacy research efforts across the state.

Major related efforts and resources include:

- ◆ **Even Start Family Literacy** through which efforts are made to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of low-income families.
- ◆ **Florida First Start Program** provides services to at-risk children from birth to two years of age and their families.
- ◆ **Title I Programs and Services** to improve educational opportunities of educationally deprived children by helping them succeed in regular school programs, attain grade level proficiency, improve in basic and more advanced skills, and progress to the same high standards as other children.
- ◆ **Migrant Education** programs and services to help reduce educational disruptions from repeated moves and to remove barriers to school attendance and academic achievement.
- ◆ **Emergency Immigrant Education** programs and services for students whose country of origin is other than the United States.
- ◆ **Dual Language Programs**, instructional school-level programs that promote literacy in English plus another language.
- ◆ **English for Speakers of Other Languages**, programs that ensure the delivery of comprehensible instruction and equal access to all programs.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

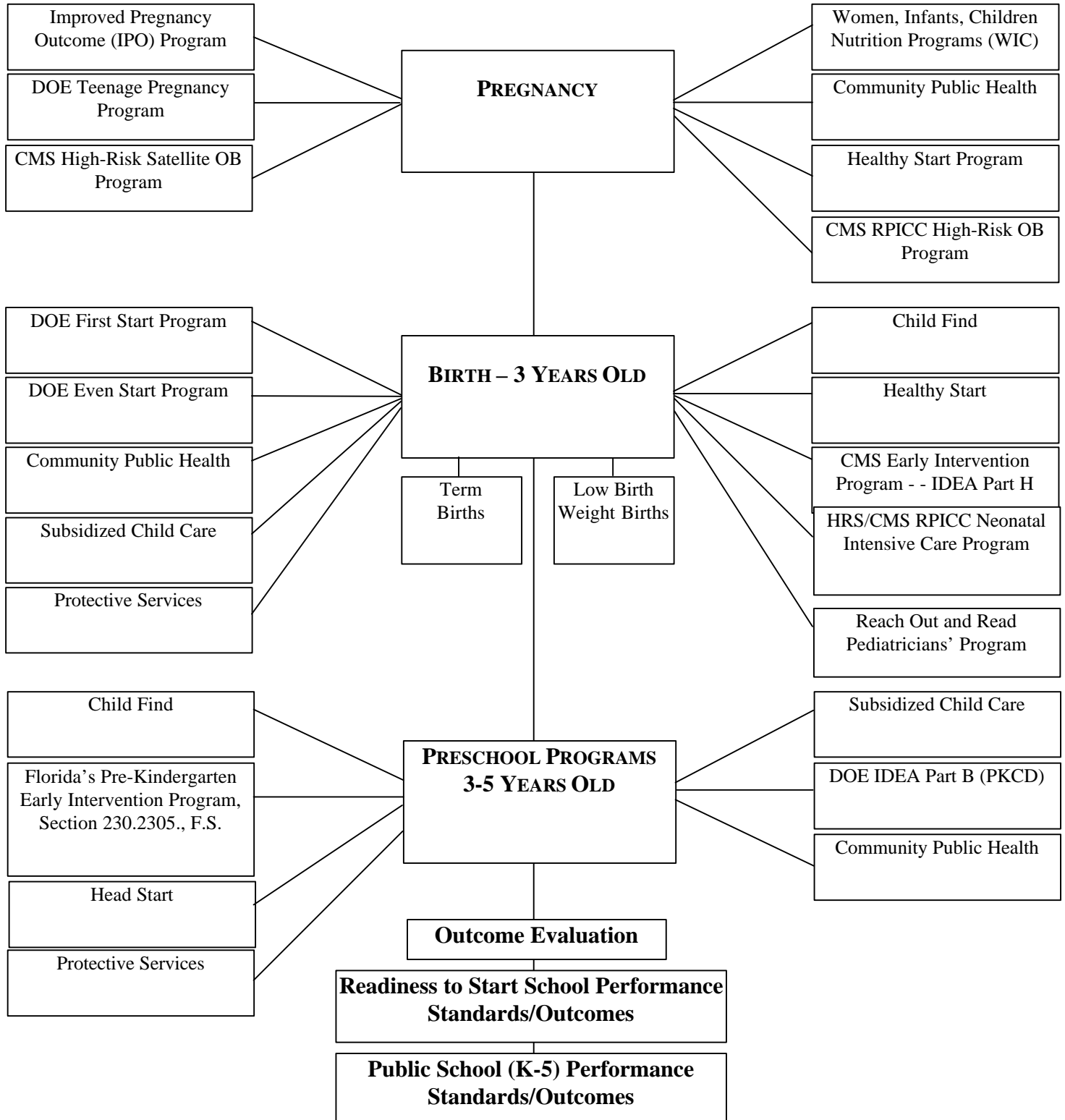
- ◆ **State Reading Improvement** grants for improving the quality and effectiveness of reading instruction in selected schools.
- ◆ **Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration** Projects for critically low performing schools that are in need of school improvement.
- ◆ **Carl Perkins** program to improve technical education programs in secondary schools and community colleges.
- ◆ **School-to-Work** efforts designed to provide services in which work-site learning is integrated with school-based curriculum
- ◆ **Gender Equity** efforts to recruit and enroll into training for high-wage occupations single parents, displaced homemakers, single pregnant women, and students interested in pursuing careers that are nontraditional for their gender.
- ◆ **Goals 2000** grants targeting improvements in reading instruction.
- ◆ **Drug Free Schools and Communities** to improve school safety and reduce incidents of drug use, crime, violence, and other disruptive behavior that interferes with student achievement.
- ◆ **Business Partnerships** for districts and schools that encourage literacy and sponsor activities designed to improve reading proficiency.
- ◆ **Volunteer Organizations** and programs such as AmeriCorp that may provide tutoring services in local programs.
- ◆ **Florida Department of Education Offices and Programs** including the Office of School Improvement, Evaluation and Reporting Services, Instructional Technology, and Exceptional Student Education and the Bureau of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.
- ◆ **Education of Homeless Children and Youth** providing funds to school districts to provide technical assistance and professional development activities for district staff assigned to work with homeless children and youth.
- ◆ **State and Regional Coordinating Councils for Early Childhood Services** to ensure coordination at the local level among the various agencies and programs serving preschool children.
- ◆ **Reach Out and Read (ROR)** is a program linking literacy and a healthy childhood. It is an intervention by doctors, particularly pediatricians, helping at-risk families understand the importance and joy of reading to very young children by discussing with parents the pluses of reading, giving out books at pediatric check-ups, and providing volunteer readers in the waiting room model the techniques and rewards of reading aloud. This unique endeavor, in over ten locations in Florida, capitalizes on recent research about brain development and has had a tremendous positive effect on young children.
- ◆ **South East Region Vision for Education (SERVE)**, the U.S. research and development laboratory serving Florida.
- ◆ **Region XIV Comprehensive Assistance Center** providing training and technical assistance to schools in Florida.
- ◆ **Florida Reading and Family Literacy Center**, a planned center for research and dissemination of information on reading and family literacy.
- ◆ **Preservice Education** Programs in Florida's Colleges of Education
- ◆ **Regional Area Centers for Educational Enhancement**, six centers spread across Florida that provide training and technical assistance to local school districts in curriculum and assessment.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

FIGURE 2

FLORIDA'S PREVENTION, EARLY ASSISTANCE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM



MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

Representatives of these and other related services and programs will serve on the **FLaRE** Initiative Implementation Committee. Many of these representatives have assisted in reviewing drafts of the Reading Excellence Grant proposal and provided extensive input into the conceptualization of the comprehensive **FLaRE** Initiative. The Implementation Committee will meet quarterly to share information and address issues and concerns during the process of awarding LEA grants, monitoring implementation, and reviewing evaluation results.

In addition, the application requirements for LEAs will include requirements for coordination at the local and regional levels between the **FLaRE** funded grants and the local programs and services listed above. Specific coordination activities will be required between the proposed projects and currently funded federal and state projects targeting reading instruction such Title I projects and Goals 2000 Continuation Projects. Coordination between these various groups will be a component of the comprehensive evaluation.

B.1.C. COORDINATION WITH FAMILY LITERACY AND ADULT EDUCATION

In recognition of the research findings that provide a direct link between adults who have difficulty in reading and their children who often also have difficulty in learning to read, Florida has implemented a strong Adult Literacy Program. The state has funded, through lottery funds, the establishment of adult literacy centers to focus on these three of Florida's Goals:

- **Goal 3 – Student Performance:** Students successfully compete at the highest levels nationally and internationally and are prepared to make well-reasoned, thoughtful, and healthy lifelong decisions.
- **Goal 7 – Adult Literacy:** Adult Floridians are literate and have the knowledge and skills needed to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- **Goal 8 – Parent Involvement:** Communities, school boards, and schools provide opportunities for involving parents and guardians as active partners in achieving school improvement and education accountability.

A total of \$400,000 was set aside to establish these literacy centers in each of the five Workforce Development Regions. The centers provide a variety of components including:

- ◆ Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children.
- ◆ Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.
- ◆ Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency.
- ◆ An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

The **FLaRE** Initiative will work cooperatively with the Family and Adult Literacy regional centers by sharing developed products on reading and family literacy and including these centers as dissemination arms for training materials. In addition, the DOE will require LEA subgrant applicants to describe procedures for:

- ◆ coordinating, supporting and expanding their family literacy efforts with these established centers.
- ◆ development and delivery of parent education opportunities that explain the components of research-based reading programs.
- ◆ establishment and operation of local partnerships with community based organizations.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

B.2. CURRENT RESEARCH AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICE IN LITERACY AND READING

In the last two decades, an extensive body of research on reading and literacy has demonstrated some very effective practices and programs. The National Research Council's *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) and the "how to" guide, *Starting Out Right* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1999) reviews and summarizes these scientifically based reading research reports and documents recommendations on how to facilitate proficient reading in young children by the end of the third grade. Highlights from the current research and effective practice in literacy and reading are summarized in the following sections. These results about reading, reading growth, and reading difficulties and the recommendations of the National Research Council will be used by Florida to guide and direct the **FLaRE** Initiative.

The National Research Council's recent report on preventing reading problems in young children (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) concluded that the majority of reading problems could be prevented, primarily by reducing the number of children who enter school inadequately prepared. Inadequately prepared refers to poorly developed emergent literacy skills in at least three critical domains: phonological awareness, knowledge about print, and vocabulary. At the prereader level, phonological processing refers to a child's developing sensitivity to the sound structure of his or her oral language, and use of phonological or sound-based codes in processing language. Knowledge about print refers to a developing understanding of the nature and purposes of books, printed words, and letters. Vocabulary refers to the corpus of words in a child's receptive and expressive vocabularies. Weaknesses in these three critical domains are particularly common among children from poor neighborhoods, children with limited proficiency in English, and children whose parents report difficulty learning to read. Fortunately, evidence indicates that it is possible to improve performance in each domain for most children by preschool and home-based intervention activities.

Key conclusions and findings from the National Research Council report include:

1. Adequate reading comprehension is the most important ultimate outcome of effective instruction in reading. No matter what one's personal preferences for instructional method, the end goal is to help children comprehend written material at a level that is consistent with their general intellectual abilities.
2. Both general language comprehension ability and the ability to identify accurately and fluently the words in print are required for good reading comprehension.
3. Most children who become poor readers experience early and continuing difficulties in learning how to identify accurately printed words. Their problems are primarily centered in two areas. First, they almost invariably have difficulties understanding and applying the alphabetic principle in deciphering unfamiliar words. Difficulties mastering the alphabetic principle are frequently referred to as difficulties learning "phonics," and they are a ubiquitous characteristic of children with reading difficulties (Siegle, 1989). Second, poor readers at all grade levels are characterized by slower than normal development of a "sight word vocabulary" of words they can read fluently and automatically. Ultimately, it is this difficulty in rapid word recognition that limits comprehension in older poor readers, for these skills allow children to focus on constructing the meaning of what they are reading rather than spending too many of their intellectual resources on trying to identify the words (Adams, 1990).

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

4. The most common cause of difficulties acquiring early word reading skills is weakness in the ability to process the phonological features of language (Liberman, Shankweiler, & Liberman, 1989). This is perhaps the most important discovery about reading difficulties in the last 20 years. Weaknesses in the phonological area of language development can be measured by a variety of non-reading tasks, but the ones most commonly used assess phonemic awareness, which can be defined simply as the ability to identify, think about, or manipulate, the individual sounds in words.
5. The best solution to the problem of reading failure is to allocate resources for early identification and prevention. There are compelling reasons, reflecting both the affective and cognitive consequences of early reading failure, to focus our efforts on ways to deliver extra help in reading to at-risk children before or during the early stages of reading instruction. As Stanovich (1986) pointed out in his well-known paper on the "Matthew effects" associated with failure to acquire early word reading skills, these consequences range from negative attitudes toward reading (Oka & Paris, 1986), to reduced opportunities for vocabulary growth (Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985), to missed opportunities for development of reading comprehension strategies (Brown, Palincsar, & Purcell, 1986), to less actual practice in reading than other children receive (Allington, 1984). Thus, school-based preventive efforts should be engineered to maintain growth in critical word reading skills at *roughly normal levels* throughout the early elementary school period. Although adequate development of these skills in the early elementary grades does not guarantee that children will continue to maintain normal growth throughout elementary school without extra help, to the extent that we allow children to fall seriously behind at any point during early elementary school, we are moving to a "remedial" rather than a "preventive" model of intervention. Once children fall behind in the growth of critical word reading skills, it may require very intensive interventions to bring them back up to adequate levels of reading accuracy (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1994; Vaughn & Schumm, 1996), and reading fluency may be even more difficult to restore because of the large amount of reading practice that is lost by children each month and year they remain poor readers (Rashotte, Torgesen, & Wagner, 1997).

All of these considerations led leaders in the Florida Legislature and the Florida Department of Education to agree with the report of the National Research Council (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998) that instruction for reading growth during the K-3 years should focus on:

1. The development of phonemic awareness
2. The development of alphabetic, or phonemic decoding skills
3. The development of a fluent sight word vocabulary
4. The development of ability to comprehend the meaning of text.

The Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership, in conjunction with the Florida DOE, will encourage LEA's to assess the effectiveness of their reading improvement efforts by measuring growth in these four areas. For purposes of monitoring effectiveness of new programs, outcomes in these areas should be assessed at the end of first, second, and third grades. At the end of kindergarten, outcomes are more properly assessed in terms of children's level of phonemic awareness, their knowledge of letters and letter/sounds, concepts about print, and receptive and expressive vocabulary.

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

B.3. RESEARCH DESIGN FOR USING SCIENTIFICALLY BASED RESEARCH ON READING AND LITERACY

The scientifically based research on reading and literacy as described in the previous section and in other sections of this grant application will permeate the **FLaRE** Initiative. The most critical elements of an effective program for the prevention of reading disability at the elementary school level are: (a) the right kind and quality of instruction delivered with the (b) right level of intensity and duration to (c) the right children at the (d) right time. Each of these elements is explicated in the following section.

The right kind and quality of instruction. There is now a broad consensus that instruction in reading for children at-risk for reading problems must be more structured, systematic, and explicit than for children with normal abilities in this area. As experienced teachers understand (Gaskins, et al., 1996), we cannot assume that these children will acquire any necessary skill for reading words unless they are directly taught that skill or knowledge and receive sufficient opportunities to practice it. Some of the word level skills and knowledge these children will require instruction on include:

- ◆ phonemic awareness,
- ◆ letter-sound correspondences
- ◆ blending skills
- ◆ a small number of pronunciation conventions (i.e. silent *e* rule)
- ◆ use of context to help specify a word once it is partially or completely phonemically decoded
- ◆ strategies for multi-syllable words
- ◆ automatic recognition of high frequency “irregular” words.

It goes almost without saying that this type of instruction should be embedded within as many opportunities for meaningful reading and writing as possible. The lesson from recent large scale prevention studies (Brown & Felton, 1990; Foorman, et al., 1998; Torgesen, et al., in press; Vellutino, et al., 1997) is that it is possible to maintain critical word reading skills of most children at risk for reading failure at roughly average levels if this type of instruction is provided beginning sometime during kindergarten or first grade.

The right level of intensity. Greater intensity and duration of instruction is required because the increased explicitness of instruction for children who are at risk for reading failure requires that more things be taught directly by the teacher. Intensity of instruction is increased primarily by reducing teacher student ratios. Unless beginning reading instruction for children with phonological weaknesses is more intensive (or lasts significantly longer) than normal instruction, these children will necessarily lag significantly behind their peers in reading growth. An effective preventive program may involve several levels of instructional intensity ranging from small group to one-on-one instruction, depending upon the severity of the risk factors for each child.

The right children at the right time. These factors are considered together because they are both tied directly to the availability of accurate identification procedures at various age levels. That is, to be most efficient, a preventive program should be focused on the children who are most in need of special instruction. The efficiency of the entire process will be improved if procedures are available to accurately target the right children very early in the process of reading instruction. Although timing issues with regard to preventive instruction have not been completely resolved by research (Torgesen, et al., in press), it is known, for example, that instruction in phonological awareness during kindergarten can have a positive effect on reading growth after formal reading instruction begins in the first grade (Lundberg,

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

Frost, & Peterson, 1988). Thus, the assumption can be made that it will be useful to identify high risk children at some time during the kindergarten year or early first grade so that preventive work may begin as early as possible.

Florida will use the following strategies to ensure the use of the previously discussed scientifically based reading and literacy research throughout the state.

- ◆ **Statewide Reading and Family Literacy Summit.** Awareness of this new body of scientific knowledge will be provided through the Reading and Family Literacy Summit to be held by the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership. National researchers will be invited to present their latest research to this conference of district staff, local project staff, early childhood service providers, university faculty, and other key players in reading and family literacy efforts across the state.
- ◆ **Statewide Preparation Workshop.** Generating a full knowledge of the reading research and implications for classroom practice will be a major purpose of the Statewide Preparation Workshops. Staff from all eligible districts and schools will be invited to learn about the National Research Council's report and how they can implement more effective strategies to ensure all children are reading by Grade 3. Florida is fortunate to have leading researchers in reading and literacy within the state who will be invited to present at this critical workshop. Examples include:

Dr. Joseph Torgesen, Florida State University
Dr. Janet Allen, University of Central Florida
Dr. Barbara Palmer, Florida State University
Dr. Nancy Romance, Florida Atlantic University
Dr. Christopher Lonigan, Florida State University
Dr. Patricia Mathes, Florida State University
Dr. Michael Resnick, University of Florida
Dr. Cecil Mercer, University of Florida
Dr. Batya Elbaum, University of Miami
Dr. Richard Wagner, Florida State University

National leaders in the field of reading research that will be invited to participate in Florida's **FLaRE** Initiative may include:

Dr. Barbara Foorman, University of Texas, Houston
Dr. Elfrida Hiebert, CIERA (Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement),
University of Michigan
Dr. Reid Lyons, National Institutes of Health
Dr. Robert Slavin, Johns Hopkins University
Dr. Bill Blokker, Professional Development Institute, Seattle, Washington
Dr. Douglas Carnine, National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators (NCITE),
University of Oregon

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

- ◆ **State Supported Professional Development.** To facilitate the use of scientifically based research on reading in Florida classrooms, the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Center will generate a series of documents and products to inform all potential grant applicants about the most recent rigorous scientific studies, the National Research Council report, and ramifications and recommendations for classroom practice. All print, web-based, and CD-ROM based materials for professional development that are generated through grant funds will incorporate the scientifically based reading and family literacy research. An example of one document will be a concise guide for districts throughout Florida in the development and implementation of a balanced, comprehensive reading program in prekindergarten through grade three. Anticipated authors of the document are Dr. Joseph Torgesen and Dr. Barbara Palmer of Florida State University. This document will provide discussions of the essential components of effective reading instruction as they are currently understood, as well as specification of the features of classrooms and school campuses that support effective beginning reading instruction.

Examples of topics that will be covered under the components of effective instruction include: activities to stimulate phonemic awareness; the importance of learning about letters; the nature of systematic, explicit instruction in phonics; the importance of linguistically based instruction in spelling patterns beginning in first grade; methods to stimulate development of vocabulary, comprehension, and higher-order thinking skills. It will also include a discussion of the kinds of instructional materials that can be used effectively to support specific instructional goals. Under the heading of classroom and school features that support effective instruction in reading, topics such as the following will be discussed: allocation of sufficient instructional time to reading and language arts; use of effective instructional practices such as flexible grouping strategies, direct instruction and feedback, provision of extra instruction for children having difficulties; provision of ample reading opportunities including time and encouragement for free reading and availability of a wide selection of good children's literature; establishment of a regular program of assessment involving screening, informal assessments, and formal end-of-year assessments; and a program of sustained and coordinated inservice development of all personnel involved in reading instruction.

This document will be written in language that is easily accessible to teachers and administrators. The DOE anticipates the production of a very useful document, based on previous work with Dr. Torgesen in the production of materials to help schools bring phonemic awareness training into the reading curriculum. He and Dr. Patricia Mathes produced two documents ("What Every Teacher Should Know about Phonemological Awareness" and "A Resource Manual for Assessment and Instruction in Phonological Awareness") that have been in high demand throughout the state since they were published last year by the Florida Department of Education.

Through the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Center, the DOE will also produce a document to guide pre-school instruction in emergent literacy instruction. The anticipated author is Dr. Christopher Lonigan at Florida State University, a nationally known researcher on the development of early literacy skills, and one of the pioneers in the development of the "Dialogic Reading Strategy" for conducting shared reading experiences in a way that will provide maximal stimulation to vocabulary development. The National Research Council report on preventing reading problems in young children (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) concluded that the majority of reading problems could be prevented, primarily by reducing the number of children who enter

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

school inadequately prepared. Inadequately prepared refers to poorly development emergent literacy skills in at least three critical domains: phonological awareness; knowledge about print; and vocabulary. At the prereader level, phonological processing refers to a child's developing sensitivity to the sound structure of his or her oral language, and use of phonological or sound-based codes in processing language. Knowledge about print refers to a developing understanding of the nature and purposes of books, printed words, and letters. Vocabulary refers to the corpus of words in a child's receptive and expressive vocabularies. Weaknesses in these three critical domains are particularly common among children from poor neighborhoods, children with limited proficiency in English, and children whose parents report difficulty learning to read. Fortunately, evidence indicates that it is possible to improve performance in each domain for most children by preschool- and home-based intervention activities.

The guiding document for pre-school programs will include a discussion of developmentally appropriate techniques to stimulate growth in each of these three important areas. It will also contain a description of important new resources that will be helpful in teaching preschool children, such as books for parents like Hall and Moats' (1999) recent title, "Straight Talk about Reading," preschool curricula such as the "Ladders to Literacy" program written by Notari-Syverson, O'Connor, and Vadasy (1998)). Ladders to Literacy: A pre-school activity book. Baltimore, MD; Brookes Publishing), or computer programs such as Daisy Quest and Daisy's Castle (Ericson, Foster, Foster, & Torgesen, 1994), Earobics I (Wasowisc, 1996), and the Waterford Early Reading Program that are effective in stimulating phonemic awareness in young children.

- ◆ **FLaRE Initiative Regional Forums.** The regional forums will provide a platform for furthering knowledge about reading and literacy research as well as sharing practices that are working in Florida schools. Documents and reports containing scientifically based reading and family literacy research will be disseminated to all grant participants who attend the regional forums.
- ◆ **LEA Grants.** All grants funded through the Florida Reading Excellence Grant will be required to demonstrate an understanding of this body of knowledge and reflect the knowledge in their proposed practices. The LEA criteria specify that the proposals include documentation of scientifically based reading research, and no program will be funded if it does not meet or exceed this criterion.
- ◆ **Preservice and Inservice Courses in Reading Research.** Although all Colleges of Education teach reading, considerable variation exists in the content of these courses. Through the Reading and Family Literacy Center and the Florida Teacher Training Centers, the DOE will compile a recommended syllabus, annotated bibliography, and course documentation for use at the preservice and inservice levels to train new teachers and returning teachers on the body of knowledge reflected in scientifically based reading and family literacy research. Experts from all of the state Colleges of Education will be represented in this development effort, as well as experts in second language acquisition and literacy development for LEP students. This syllabus will also be provided to the staff development departments of all school districts eligible for grants to incorporate into their staff development programs on reading and family literacy.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

- ◆ **State Supported Research on Effective Reading Strategies for LEP Students.** The Florida DOE will launch a special research project studying Effective Reading Strategies for LEP Students. This research project will be conducted in conjunction with the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Center. It is anticipated that more than 500 LEP students will participate in this special study made possible by the unusual demographics of the South Florida region. A rigorous research design will be required that will include random assignment of children to treatment and control groups and extend for two years to track the impact of the treatment programs on the children.

These multi-pronged approaches will ensure that all eligible school districts and schools are well-informed about the research on effective reading and family literacy instruction and the implications of that compiled research for practices in classrooms in Florida. The strategies also will generate documents that can be reprinted through other funds for use with all school districts and schools in Florida, thus serving a broader audience and increasing the effectiveness of the Reading Excellence Grant resources. The research study conducted with Limited English Proficiency children under the auspices of the grant includes specific requirements for scientific rigor of the study. The combined approaches are based upon a specific research design that is of high quality and appropriate for the State of Florida.

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MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

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B.4. COMPREHENSIVE EFFORT TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING AND SUPPORT RIGOROUS ACADEMIC STANDARDS

B.4.A. EFFORT TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Current research strongly indicates that failure in reading is the single overwhelming reason that children are retained, assigned to special education, or given long-term remedial services. The goal of any statewide reading initiative must be to ensure that all children learn to read well, but especially by the end of third grade. This understanding has led the Florida Legislature, with the support of the Governor and the Florida Department of Education, to revise Florida Statute 232.245 to provide requirements that:

- ◆ ensure early annual assessment of children's reading abilities
- ◆ provide intensive reading instruction to those children not meeting a district standard
- ◆ ensure that children are not promoted without having learned to read at appropriate grade levels

The **FLaRE** Initiative will enhance and extend these efforts and will be strongly coordinated with the efforts through the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership and the Florida DOE. The Florida DOE has developed a policy statement on Reading and Family Literacy that recommends adoption of the report from the Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children as the basis for its reading initiative. Further, the Department endorses each school district's authority to choose challenging, interesting curricula and teaching methods and strategies that have the following characteristics:

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

- ◆ **Research based** - Each district should carefully review the research basis for any program or strategy it wishes to implement. In particular, attention should be paid to the research that was conducted initially to develop the program as well as to the research conducted after publication. It is important to determine if research supports the effectiveness of the program or approach with children having similar characteristics to those with whom it will be used.
- ◆ **Balanced** - A balanced reading curriculum is one which contains a mix of instruction and practice activities sufficient to build strong word reading skills as well as the ability to construct the meaning of text. Programs that contain both systematic, explicit instruction in phonemic decoding skills (phonological awareness and sound-symbol relationships) and rich and meaningful experiences with good literature to build comprehension and enjoyment of print will be considered balanced. Programs or approaches that do not meet this definition will not be supported.
- ◆ **Based in Florida's Sunshine State Standards** - All reading curricula and instructional methods should be firmly based in the Florida Sunshine State Standards and should clearly support the benchmarks of those standards.
- ◆ **Focused on Pre-kindergarten through grade three** - Needs at higher-grade levels cannot be ignored, but primary focus must be at the early grade levels. The need for this focus is clearly outlined through the research that forms the basis for *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (1998), published by the National Research Council. Specifically, focus should center on:
 - Early childhood - Prekindergarten and kindergarten efforts should recognize that the foundation for reading success is formed long before a child reaches first grade. Children should be given a strong base of cognitive skills related to print, background knowledge and a love of books starting at infancy.
 - First grade - All children should be taught phonetic decoding strategies, given a high proportion of new words that may be sounded out using letter-sound relationships previously taught, and provided with interesting and meaningful text to create reading pleasure.
 - Second grade and beyond - Children should be able to sound out short phonetically regular words as well as knowing many sight words and having good reading comprehension skills. They should also be reading quality literature, including nonfiction, and reading independently.
- ◆ **Diagnostic and prescriptive in nature** - Teachers must be trained in the diagnosis of reading difficulties and potential problems with emergent readers. They must also be enabled to prescribe appropriate materials and strategies to correct those deficiencies.
- ◆ **Evaluated in terms of improved student performance** - Instructional methods and curriculum materials should be based upon an expected improvement in student performance as measured by locally selected objective measures as well as statewide assessments on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test. Improvement on other measures or indicators such as attitudinal surveys may supplement these evaluation measures, but may not substitute for them.
- ◆ **Textbook adoption specifications** - Specifications for the next adoption of reading textbooks must be aligned with the components of an effective, balanced reading program. These specifications are made available to districts to help them evaluate their current materials as well as to orient teachers for the upcoming adoption. The specifications alert publishers of standards instructional materials and text must meet to become state adopted.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

- ◆ **Provide a coordinated, clearly articulated, and strategically consolidated program** - Programs which supplement and augment regular classroom instruction in reading should be directly coordinated with that instruction. Resources and activities focusing on reading instruction should be complementary of each other and should maximize the impact of efforts. Conflicting and uncoordinated approaches should be eliminated. Remedial efforts, such as those provided by Title I, Goals 2000, Technology or other grants, should support regular classroom efforts.
- ◆ **Firmly grounded in School Improvement Plans** - All reading instructional efforts should be based upon the objectives and activities contained in school improvement plans. Sufficient specificity should be contained therein to ensure coordination and effectiveness.
- ◆ **Supported by sound staff development, mentoring and follow-up inservice** - Primary grade teachers as well as preschool teachers receive minimal training in teaching reading. To maximize efforts and enhance teachers' effectiveness, a comprehensive individualized program of staff development is needed, supported by a system of mentoring and resources at the building level so that each teacher has access to knowledge, ideas and materials to enhance diagnosis and instruction.

The Commissioner of Education's budget proposal for 1999-2000 contains a request for funds to support reading activities necessary to meet the intensive reading instruction required by F.S. 232.245 and a separate request for preschool reading readiness activities for emergent readers.

Efforts to improve teaching supported through the Reading Excellence Grant will include:

- ◆ **Statewide Preparation Workshop.** Previous sections describe the Florida DOE **FLaRE Initiative** statewide preparation workshop for eligible LEAs and community-based organizations serving young children and their families. This workshop will bring greater understanding of the need for implementing scientifically based reading research, the emphasis of the grants on effective family literacy approaches such as the Keenan model used in Even Start, and specific programs based in rigorous research methods that are effective in teaching reading and family literacy.
- ◆ **On-line Information from the Florida DOE.** The Florida DOE, will provide information through the Internet on scientifically based reading research that can be used by funded LEA grants and others in revising curriculum and instructional strategies for reading and family literacy programs. Florida's extensive Florida Information Resource Network (FIRN) system connects every school district, most schools, and many teachers directly with the DOE. This electronic system affords an inexpensive and virtually real-time delivery method to keep all interested parties informed.
- ◆ **Reading Resource Collection.** Through the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Centers and the existing DOE School Improvement Resource Center Professional Library, the Department will develop a Reading and Family Literacy Resource Collection containing scientifically-based reading and family literacy research articles, documents, descriptions of programs with proven evidence of effectiveness, and preview copies of program materials and documents. This resource collection will be made available at no cost to eligible grant recipients as the districts and schools plan for their grants, and following funding to grant awardees. Dissemination will include flyers describing the collection, annotated bibliographies of resources in the collection, and direct loans of available materials.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

- ◆ **Florida DOE FLaRE Coordinator.** The Florida DOE will establish a grant position at the state level to provide support to district and school level personnel in identifying and implementing reading and family literacy programs and instructional strategies that are based on rigorous scientific research. The position will provide coordination and dissemination of reading and family research and programs throughout the various state, regional, and local agencies that serve children at risk of developing problems in learning to read and serve as the coordinating staff to the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership.
- ◆ **Reading Specialists.** The National Research Council recommends that all K-3 teachers have access to a reading specialist who has specialized knowledge of typical and atypical development of reading, including scientifically based reading and family literacy research, and of the role of the research in supporting reading instruction. The existing six state funded regional Area Centers for Educational Enhancement offices provide Masters degree specialists who can offer coaching/mentoring for teachers in their region. A recent statewide evaluation has documented that this system is especially effective in serving small and rural school districts, many of which will be eligible grant recipients. The DOE will direct the Area Centers to use their expertise in brokering services to assist local districts to hire or contract with Masters degree specialists in reading and family literacy. Additionally, eligible grant recipients will be encouraged to build into their grants obtaining coaching and mentoring services from the Area Centers to more directly impact on changing teaching behaviors, including teaching behaviors in community based preschools serving the target population.

B.4.B. EFFORT TO SUPPORT RIGOROUS ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS

Florida has an extensive history of establishing rigorous academic standards for students, and has been a national leader in establishing goals and standards for education. State goals relevant to the Reading Excellence grant activities are:

- **Goal 1 – Readiness to Start School:** Communities and schools collaborate to prepare children and families for children's success in school.
- **Goal 3 – Student Performance:** Students successfully compete at the highest levels nationally and internationally and are prepared to make well-reasoned, thoughtful, and healthy lifelong decisions.
- **Goal 6 – Teachers and Staff:** The schools, districts, colleges of education, postsecondary institutions, and state ensure professional teachers and staff.
- **Goal 7 – Adult Literacy:** Adult Floridians are literate and have the knowledge and skills needed to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- **Goal 8 – Parental Involvement:** Communities, school boards, and schools provide opportunities for involving parents and guardians as active partners in achieving school improvement and education accountability.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

Florida is also a national leader in moving public schools to a standards-driven educational system. At the heart of Florida's school improvement efforts is a standards driven curriculum that includes strands, standards and benchmarks by subject and grade clusters. Detailed content standards were adopted by the Florida State board of Education in 1996. These Florida Sunshine State Standards specify the knowledge and skills that students should acquire, divided into four separate grade clusters (PreK-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12). As Florida moves toward greater accountability for student achievement at each grade level, the Sunshine State Standards have been further defined. In the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, the Sunshine State Standards have been expanded to include Grade Level Expectations. Standards are assessed at the classroom level by teachers and through two statewide assessment tests: the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and the Florida Writing Assessment (Florida Writes!). Trainers are available from the DOE or through the Area Centers for Educational Enhancement to assist district and school personnel in implementing the standards and aligning them with local curriculum. The Language Arts Standards include the following Reading standards:

Reading Standard 1: The student uses the reading process effectively.

1. predicts what a passage is about based on its title and illustrations.
2. identifies words and constructs meaning from text, illustrations, graphics, and charts using the strategies of phonics, word structure, and context clues.
3. uses knowledge of appropriate grade-, age-, and developmental-level vocabulary in reading.
4. increases comprehension by rereading, retelling, and discussion.

Reading Standard 2: The student constructs meaning from a wide range of texts.

1. determines the main idea or essential message from text and identifies supporting information.
2. selects material to read for pleasure.
3. reads for information to use in performing a task and learning a new task.
4. knows strategies to use to discover whether information presented in a text is true, including asking others and checking another source.
5. uses simple materials of the reference system to obtain information.

Recognizing the criticality of reading to every Floridian's personal future and the effectiveness of the state as a whole, the 1997 Florida Legislature, with the support of the Governor and the Florida Department of Education, passed strong legislation to support rigorous academic standards for students. Florida Statute 232.245 was revised to provide requirements that:

- ◆ ensure early annual assessment of children's reading abilities
- ◆ provide intensive reading instruction to those children not meeting a district standard
- ◆ ensure that children are not promoted without having learned to read at appropriate grade levels.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

This year's major emphasis of the Governor and the Commissioner of Education is on the A+ Plan for Florida's schools. In the A+ Plan, all schools must meet rigorous standards of student performance levels on statewide standardized achievement tests including the performance levels of the sub-populations that are often masked by higher performing levels of the majority populations in some schools. The Commissioner of Education's budget proposal for 1999-2000 contains a request for funds to support reading activities necessary to meet the intensive reading instruction required by F.S. 232.245. A separate request in the budget proposal addresses major increases in funding for preschool reading readiness activities for emergent readers. The Reading Excellence Grant resources will be used to coordinate and expand on these legislative and budget efforts to create a comprehensive system for supporting rigorous academic standards for children in the areas of reading and family literacy.

B.5. PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Florida has an extensive history of involving parents in the education of their children. Indicators of this strong parental involvement are:

- ◆ In 1997 there were a total of 17,030,523 volunteer hours logged within the 67 school districts.
- ◆ A document called INTERLOCK serves as a directory that contains information about school district's volunteer, business partnership and family involvement programs.
- ◆ First School Volunteer Conference was held in 1977
- ◆ In 1983 the Florida Legislature funded the Out Of School Learner Program and created Neighbors Involved in Kids Education
- ◆ Earlier this decade, the Florida Legislature passed the School Improvement and Accountability Law that established school advisory councils and restructures education, requiring community membership on the school advisory councils and community involvement in the process. Currently 51% of the membership of the School Advisory Council must be non-school personnel.

Goal 8 of the nine State Goals for Education stresses the importance of Parent Involvement in Florida's education communities: Communities, school boards, and schools provide opportunities for involving parents and guardians as active partners in achieving school improvement and education accountability. In Florida, parents are involved early in the education of their children. Programs such as the following assist parents during pregnancy:

- ◆ Improved Pregnancy Outcome Program
- ◆ DOE Teenage Pregnancy Program
- ◆ CMS High-Risk Satellite OB Program
- ◆ Women Infants, Children Nutrition Programs
- ◆ Community Public Health
- ◆ Healthy Start Program

New brain research shows that experiences during the first three years of life are critical to a child's future opportunities. Florida currently has over half a million children including nearly 350,000 children birth to five who are enrolled in some type of formal out-of-home child care. Much of this

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

child-care is subsidized publicly, either directly or through tax credits. Florida coordinates with the following agencies and programs to assist parents meet the needs of their children from birth to 3 years of age:

- ◆ DOE First Start Program
- ◆ DOE Even Start Program
- ◆ Community Public Health
- ◆ Subsidized Child Care
- ◆ Protective Services
- ◆ Child Find
- ◆ Healthy Start CMS Early Intervention Program---IDEA Part H
- ◆ HRS-CMS RPICC Neonatal Intensive Care Program

It isn't coincidental that Florida's Goal #1 is "Readiness to Start School: Communities and schools collaborate to prepare children and families for children's success in school." The state is committed to ensuring that all children come to school ready to learn. As part of their commitment to early childhood programs and preparing children for school, the Florida DOE has developed a book in English and Spanish for parents called *Sunrise Skill Builders---You Are Your Child's First Teacher*. In the book Frank T. Brogan, now Florida's Lt. Governor, states "As first teachers, parents play a vital role in making sure their children are ready for school." These easy-to-read books are given to all new parents in the state through hospital maternity wards. They contain information on child growth and development and provide suggested activities for parents to do with their young children at every stage, including language development activities and methods for creating a language rich environment.

In addition several programs provide assistance to parents in involving themselves with their child's education:

- ◆ Florida's Pre-Kindergarten Early Intervention Program
- ◆ Head Start
- ◆ Protective Services
- ◆ Subsidized Child Care
- ◆ DOE IDEA Part B
- ◆ Community Public Health
- ◆ Reach Out and Read (ROR)
- ◆ Parents to kids: \$5 million dollars in state general revenue funds are awarded to school districts to encourage parents to read and to encourage parents to read to and with their children.
- ◆ The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a home-based program for the educational enrichment of preschool children and for the promotion of parents as their child's first teacher.
- ◆ DOE—For the Children Initiative, a statewide initiative to provide training for parents in at least five languages on Florida's Public School System and equal access to education for all.
- ◆ NationsBank, the Florida DOE, and the Florida PTA, have sponsored a Parent Involvement Award since 1996.
- ◆ FDOE publications related to parent/family involvement: *Parent Primer for School Improvement and Accountability*; *Sparkplugs for Parent Involvement – Exemplary Practices*; *The Family Resource Directory*; and others

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

A guiding force in early childhood and school readiness activities has been the Florida School Readiness 2000 State Collaborative Group that has developed the following Key Policy Goals of School Readiness:

FLORIDA SCHOOL READINESS 2000 STATE COLLABORATIVE GROUP KEY POLICY GOALS OF SCHOOL READINESS

- ◆ Engage parents and families and expand consumer education on the importance of the early years.
 - Recognize that parents are the key to school readiness.
 - Expand resource and referral services so parents can make informed choices about early childhood programs.
 - Implement a simplified/unified point of entry to all publicly funded early education and care programs
- ◆ Improve quality of services.
 - All early education and care programs must be of a quality to promote school readiness.
 - The key to the quality of early education and care is the adults who provide it.
 - Encourage communities to increase the number of accredited programs.
 - Programs must be available for children of employed parents on a full-day, full-year schedule.
 - Health care is an essential component of school readiness.
 - Create an Early Childhood Center of Excellence Program for birth to 3 where the need is the greatest.
- ◆ Identify special needs early and measure effectiveness of programs.
- ◆ Credential Child-Care Directors.
- ◆ Improve training and compensation of adults who serve as teachers and caregivers.
- ◆ Streamline licensing and improve enforcement.
- ◆ Improve the financing of early education and care through a combination of public and private investments.
- ◆ Strengthen the governance of early education and care programs.

As part of their ongoing commitment to early childhood programs and school readiness, the Florida DOE will integrate **FLaRE** activities into current efforts and strategies in this area. The DOE will take the following steps specifically through the Reading Excellence grant resources:

- ◆ The Florida Department of Education will require Subgrant applicants to identify strategies that will assist in the accomplishment of the three key initiatives directly related to the Reading Excellence Act and the Florida School Readiness 2000 State Collaborative Group Key Policy Goals of School Readiness to include:
 - recognizing that parents are the key to school readiness
 - ensuring that all early education and care programs must be of a quality to promote school readiness
 - Describing how parents can participate in literacy-related activities assisted through the grant to enhance their children's reading
- ◆ The state will expand efforts through the Family Involvement section of the Office of Business and Education Alliances and the Office of Early Intervention and School Readiness to promote public awareness in providing:

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

- stimulating literacy experiences in the lives of young children
- early identification of children at risk for reading difficulties

LEA applications will provide instructions to eligible districts and schools about the importance of parental involvement and school readiness activities and incorporate these factors into the guidelines for submitting grants as well as the grant review criteria.

C. READING EXCELLENCE GRANT PROJECT SERVICES

In this section, more detail is provided concerning the services that will be provided to enhance the implementation of the Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance Grants. There is some overlap of the material in this section with that provided in the previous section, but the effort here is to detail the specific services that will be provided in order to insure that the funds spent to improve literacy will be targeted in the most effective way. This section also describes the subgrant application process to be used in Florida, along with the subgrant application form and criteria for awarding subgrants.

C.1. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

C.1.A. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Florida proposes a wide array of professional development services to support and enhance implementation of Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance subgrants including:

- ◆ **Staff Development Program on Reading and Family Literacy.** The Florida Reading and Family Literacy Center, in collaboration with the DOE Human Resources Development unit will create a staff development program designed specifically to address reading and family literacy that incorporates all the major components of reading instruction (including phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension). As described before, the program will be developed in a modular format to assist districts in implementing it in sequential staff development sessions with whole school faculties. The program will be disseminated to all grant recipient district staff development offices through the Reading Excellence grant, and will be duplicated for use in all Florida districts through other fiscal resources. An electronic version will be made available on the Internet.
- ◆ **LEA Grant Requirements.** The state will require as a part of the subgrant application that LEA staff development activities must be consistent with the scientifically based instructional competencies that are reflected in Florida Education Standards Commission Subject Matter Content Standards for Teachers which include Reading (Phonological Awareness, Phonics/Decoding, Fluency, and Comprehension) Writing, Listening, Speaking, Viewing, Language and Technology. The competencies reflect scientifically based reading skills.
- ◆ **LEA Grant Preference.** Preference will be given to districts supporting a coaching, demonstration, mentoring model of staff development at local school sites. Eligible districts and schools will be informed in advance of this preference through the Statewide Preparation Conference, grant application guidelines, grant rating criteria, and e-mail notices to the districts and schools.
- ◆ **Reading Specialists.** The **FLaRE Initiative** will encourage eligible grant recipients to build into their grants obtaining coaching and mentoring services from the Area Centers to more

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

directly impact on instilling teaching behaviors that are well founded in scientifically based reading and family literacy research.

- ◆ **Preservice and Inservice Courses in Reading Research.** The previously described compilation of a syllabus and resources for teaching research based reading will be provided to the staff development departments of all school districts eligible for grants to incorporate into their staff development programs on reading and family literacy. In addition, it will be shared with the Teacher Preparation Program Committee established by the 1999 Florida Legislature to impact on new requirements for teacher preparation.
- ◆ **Reading Resource Collection.** The Department will develop a Reading and Family Literacy Resource Collection as described earlier. Dissemination will include flyers describing the collection, annotated bibliographies of resources in the collection, and direct loans of available materials upon request through the dissemination system currently administered by the DOE School Improvement Resource Center Professional Library.
- ◆ **Statewide Reading and Family Literacy Summit.** As previously described, the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership will sponsor a Reading and Family Literacy Summit. Purposes of the summit will be to bring to all Florida school districts the latest scientifically based reading research, serve as a forum for dissemination of new methods and products to improve reading instruction at all levels from birth to adulthood, highlight the successes of funded **FLaRE** LEA grants, and focus statewide attention of all citizens on issues and effective programs for ensuring all children learn to read by the end of Grade Three.
- ◆ **Statewide Preparation Workshop.** Prior to awarding grants, the Florida DOE will hold a statewide preparation workshop for eligible LEAs to bring greater understanding of the need for implementing scientifically based reading research, the emphasis of the grants on effective family literacy approaches such as the Keenan model used in Even Start, and specific programs based in rigorous research methods that are effective in teaching reading and family literacy.
- ◆ **FLaRE Regional Forums.** Up to Five **FLaRE** regional forums will be held each year for all grant recipients. These forums will facilitate networking among funded projects about effective strategies, inform grantees about products and programs available for technical assistance, and provide a platform for individual projects to share their successes.
- ◆ **State Supported Professional Development.** Details have been provided earlier on the variety of print, web-based, and CD-ROM based materials that will be developed for use by the LEA grantees, preschools, and community based organizations. Target audiences include instructing teachers and staff, school reading specialists, principals, other school staff, and district staff about scientifically based reading research and effective family literacy programs and strategies. A key component will be the development of a web-based training and technical assistance component to be incorporated into the successful STEPS program located at the University of West Florida.
- ◆ **State Supported Technical Assistance.** All LEA grantees will receive technical assistance including modeling and coaching from the Florida Area Centers for Educational Enhancement, six regional centers for training and technical assistance that specialize in tailoring training and technical assistance to the needs of the local school districts and schools.
- ◆ **Collaboration with the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Center for Materials Development.** The Partnership and Florida DOE will work closely with the planned Florida Reading and Family Literacy Center to develop and disseminate materials and products for use by the LEA grantees. These activities have been previously detailed in other sections of this narrative.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

These coordinated activities will ensure that all preservice and currently practicing teachers in Florida are trained to use consistently all of the major components of reading instruction including phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension.

C.1.B PREPARING TEACHERS IN ALL MAJOR COMPONENTS OF READING INSTRUCTION

Florida is committed to demonstrating for reading and family literacy the same statewide dedication it has exerted that raised student writing performance over the last five years. A critical component in effecting change in the ways that students are taught to read is retraining teachers in the scientifically based reading research on reading and family literacy instruction. Florida has already made major changes in the teacher certification requirements regarding reading and will be enacting additional regulations increasing the rigor of these requirements. Current specialization requirements for certification in Elementary Education (grades 1-6) specify three semester hours in methods and materials for teaching reading at the elementary or primary level to include credit in each of the following:

1. Sequential developmental skills and concepts of reading
2. Recognition and diagnosis of reading problems
3. Prescription and utilization of appropriate methods and materials to increase reading performance.

Florida also has Subject Matter Content Standards for Teachers that have been established by the Florida Education Standards Commission. The standards are used as:

- ◆ A tool in the continued approval of teacher education programs
- ◆ An aid in the articulation of program content between community colleges and four year institutions
- ◆ Descriptors usable in the alternative teacher education and alternative certification processes
- ◆ The foundational standards used for the development of subject matter certification examinations in the Florida teacher certification process.

Because the Florida Teacher Certification Examination uses these standards as the foundation for the subject matter certification examinations, they are key tools in changing teacher preparation in reading and family literacy.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

SUBJECT MATTER CONTENT STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

READING

1.1. Reading process.

The elementary teacher understands:

- 1.1.1. Cueing system – graphemes, phonemes, semantics, syntax.
- 1.1.2. Prediction of a passage based on its title and illustrations.
- 1.1.3. Purpose of table of contents, index, headings, captions, and illustrations.
- 1.1.4. Strategies of phonics, synonyms, antonyms, suffixes, prefixes, word structure, multiple meanings, root words, context clues to construct meaning from text and illustrations.
- 1.1.5. Comprehension by rereading, summarizing, and retelling.

1.2. Constructing meaning from a wide range of text e.g., fiction, non-fiction, poetry.

The elementary teacher understands:

- 1.2.1. Main idea and relevant supporting details.
- 1.2.2. Predicting and inferring from ideas in the text.
- 1.2.3. Placing events in sequential order when necessary.
- 1.2.4. How to determine cause and effect relationships
- 1.2.5. Drawing conclusions.
- 1.2.6. How to determine author's purpose and audience.

1.3. Reading for a variety of purposes.

The elementary teacher understands:

- 1.3.1. Reading for pleasure.
- 1.3.2. Reading for information.
- 1.3.3. Study and research skills.
- 1.3.4. Ability of children to respond to literature.

In addition to these strong regulations concerning teacher preparation in the area of reading, the following 1999 pending legislation strengthens teacher preparation in reading:

“The Commissioner of Education shall appoint a Teacher Preparation Program Committee for the purpose of establishing core curricula in each state-approved teacher preparation program. The committee shall be comprised of representatives from presidents of public and private colleges and universities, deans of colleges of education, presidents of community colleges, district school superintendents, and high performing teachers. The curricula shall be focused on the knowledge, skills, and abilities essential to instruction in the Sunshine State Standards, with a clear emphasis on the importance of reading at all grade levels....The State Board shall adopt rules that establish uniform core curricula for each state approved teacher preparation program and shall utilize this report in the development of such rules.” (PCS/HB's 751, 753 & 755)

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

Although Florida's strong requirements related to teacher preparation have and will continue to impact on new teachers entering Florida schools, many new teachers are recruited from or come from teacher preparation programs outside the state. Most teachers currently teaching in Florida classrooms were trained prior to the new regulations or come from out of state. Inservice training programs designed and operated by local school districts and the regional Area Centers for Educational Enhancement impact on the skills and knowledge of these teachers.

Through the **FLaRE** Initiative, Florida will initiate the following additional preservice and inservice teacher preparation activities designed to prepare teachers in all the major components of reading instruction.

- ◆ **Staff Development Program on Reading and Family Literacy.** The Florida Reading and Family Literacy Center, in conjunction with the Department's Human Resources Development unit will create a staff development program designed specifically to address reading and family literacy that incorporates all the major components of reading instruction (including phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension). The program will be developed in a modular format to assist districts in implementing it in sequential staff development sessions with whole school faculties. The program will be disseminated to all grant recipient district staff development offices through the Reading Excellence grant, and will be duplicated for use in all Florida districts through other fiscal resources. An electronic version will be made available on the Internet.
- ◆ **LEA Grant Requirements.** The state will require as a part of the subgrant application that LEA staff development activities must be consistent with the scientifically based instructional competencies that are reflected in Florida Education Standards Commission Subject Matter Content Standards for Teachers which include Reading (Phonological Awareness, Phonics/Decoding, Fluency, and Comprehension) Writing, Listening, Speaking, Viewing, Language and Technology. The competencies reflect scientifically based reading skills.
- ◆ **LEA Grant Preference.** Preference will be given to districts supporting a coaching, demonstration, mentoring model of staff development at local school sites and those including local partnerships with community based organizations. Eligible districts and schools will be informed in advance of this preference through the Statewide Preparation Conference, grant application guidelines, grant rating criteria, and e-mail notices to the districts and schools.
- ◆ **Reading Specialists.** The essential use of reading specialists for the **FLaRE** Initiative programs will be addressed through brokering of resources by the six Area Centers for Educational Enhancement. Many of Florida's school districts also have district specialists in reading who can provide modeling and coaching in the classrooms or broker for these services.
- ◆ **Textbook Adoption Specifications.** Specifications for the next adoption of reading textbooks will be aligned with the components of an effective, balanced reading program. These specifications are made available to districts to help them evaluate their current materials as well as to orient teachers for the upcoming adoption. The purpose of these specifications is to alert publishers to new requirements for instructional materials to be listed on the State Adopted List from which schools/districts may use state funds to purchases texts, software, supplementary materials.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

- ◆ **Preservice and Inservice Courses in Reading Research.** The DOE will contract with one of the nine state colleges of education to generate or compile a syllabus, annotated bibliography, and course documentation for use at the preservice and inservice levels to train new teachers and returning teachers on the body of knowledge reflected in scientifically based reading and family literacy research. This syllabus will also be provided to the staff development departments of all school districts eligible for grants to incorporate into their staff development programs on reading and family literacy. In addition, it will be shared with the Teacher Preparation Program Committee established by the 1999 Florida Legislature to impact on new requirements for teacher preparation.
- ◆ **Reading Resource Collection.** As described earlier, the Department will develop a Reading and Family Literacy Resource Collection containing scientifically-based reading and family literacy research articles, documents, descriptions of programs with proven evidence of effectiveness, and preview copies of program materials and documents. Districts and community-based organizations will receive flyers describing the collection and how to access it.

These coordinated activities will ensure that all preservice and currently practicing teachers in Florida are trained to use consistently all of the major components of reading instruction including phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension.

C.1.C. LIBRARY/MEDIA SERVICES.

Library and media services are critical to the support of implementing research based reading programs. A 1992 study by the Colorado Department of Education found that the highest achieving students come from schools with good libraries.

- ◆ Where library media centers are better funded, academic achievement is higher, whether their schools and communities are rich or poor and whether adults in the community are well or poorly educated.
- ◆ Students whose library media specialist participates in the instructional process are higher academic achievers.

The research review conducted by Stephen Krashen in *The Power of Reading* revealed that:

- ◆ Print-rich environment encourages more reading
- ◆ The larger school and public library collections, the more young people read
- ◆ reading is its own reward; that is, the more one reads, the more pleasant and habit forming the task becomes.

In Florida, two statewide reading motivational programs are provided for children in grades 1-3. Both programs are coordinated at the school level by the library media specialist.

- ◆ The Sunshine State Young Reader's Award Program, sponsored by the School Library Media Services Office of the Department of Education and the Florida Association for Media in Education, provides a reading list of 15 titles for grades 3-5 and a separate list for grades 6-8.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

This program is popular with third graders who either read the books or hear them read in their entirety in order to vote in a statewide balloting for their favorite book for the year. Over 1,000 schools are participating in the program.

- ◆ The Florida Reading Association Children's Book Award Program provides an opportunity for students in K-2 to vote on their favorite picture book from a reading list of 8 titles.

For the past two years the Florida Legislature has provided \$500,000 to fund the Extended Access to Library Media Service Grants. Awarded on a competitive basis by the Florida Department of Education, these funds provide for library media centers, staffed by a certified library media specialist, to be open beyond the regular school day. The hours may be any combination of afternoon, evening, weekend, or summer hours. This school year, 12 of Florida's 67 school districts were awarded grants for extended access in a total of 45 elementary schools. All of these grants addressed needs for additional reading opportunities for students and facilitation of activities such as mini-workshops for parents on selecting reading materials, reading tutors in the center, family reading nights, storytelling sessions and use of electronic resources.

School library media centers cooperate with local public libraries by promoting library card sign-up campaigns for students to get public library cards. Summer reading programs provided by the public libraries are promoted through the schools. Public libraries provide year round special activities to promote and encourage family reading. Public libraries work cooperatively with school libraries to ensure that students have access to reading material for motivational programs and programs such as the Accelerated Reader.

Through the **FLaRE** Initiative, Florida will support the following actions:

- ◆ **Enhance Book Collections.** Since many districts in Florida have spent large amounts library money on increasing technology both in the classroom and in school library media centers, some centers may need to perform a critical review of current book selections. To encourage districts to maintain availability of quality and multilevel book collections, the FDOE will give preference to districts undertaking this review and if needed dedicating resources from their grant to enhancing in-class and library book availability. Approved selections should contain acknowledged literary works on a wide spectrum of reading levels
- ◆ **Preference for Expanding Library Media Programs.** Preference will be given to LEA's and schools committing to expanding library media programs modeled after the Florida Legislative program Extended Access to Libraries Grant Award program.

C.2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

In addition to the previously listed activities promoting reading and literacy professional development, Florida will make active use of technology to develop in teachers the skills needed use consistently all of the major components of reading instruction including phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension. Florida's leading position nationally in the use of technology for statewide communication will facilitate this process. Activities will include:

- ◆ **Internet Dissemination and Use.** All Florida school districts and most Florida schools are online with the FIRN system for Internet communication. The DOE will establish a separate Listserv for the funded **FLaRE** projects. New research evidence, information on programs and strategies

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

founded in scientifically based research, and tips and techniques for staff development will be disseminated through FIRN and the Listserv.

- ◆ **Statewide Videoconference Seminars on Reading and Family Literacy.** As described previously, the DOE will contract with the Panhandle Area Center for Educational Enhancement to conduct statewide videoconferencing on reading and family literacy for all grant awardees. This center already routinely conducts Teacher Tuesday videoconferences to reach teachers in rural areas who cannot easily attend staff development activities.
- ◆ **Expand the STEPS program.** To increase access to information on reading and literacy research and implications, the DOE will support development of scientifically based reading research as an integral part of the STEPS program. This program is an Electronic Research and Curriculum Development tool developed and maintained collaboratively by the Florida Department of Education through its Area Center of Educational Enhancement located at the University of West Florida.
- ◆ **Introductory Video on Reading/Family Literacy.** In addition, the DOE will develop an introductory video explaining scientifically based reading and family literacy research. The video will last approximately 15 minutes and will present the major new findings presented in the National Research Council's report and the ramifications for classroom instruction. The video will be incorporated into other training programs and staff development activities previously described.

Ongoing communication about the Reading Excellence grant will be provided through the DOE home page. Funded LEAs will be encouraged to incorporate information about their grant activities into their district and school home pages. The result of these activities will be much more effective and efficient communication to share with the entire state education community the successes of the **FLaRE** Initiative.

C.3. USE OF UP-TO-DATE RESEARCH AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

Previous sections of this proposal have summarized much of the major research on reading and family literacy. Florida will use the following strategies to ensure the use of the previously discussed scientifically based reading and literacy research by funded Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance subgrants.

- ◆ **Statewide Reading and Family Literacy Summit.** Awareness of this new body of scientific knowledge will be provided through the Reading and Family Literacy Summit to be held by the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership. National researchers will be invited to present their latest research to this conference of district staff, local project staff, early childhood service providers, university faculty, and other key players in reading and family literacy efforts across the state.
- ◆ **Statewide Preparation Workshop.** Generating a full knowledge of the reading research and implications for classroom practice will be a major purpose of the Statewide Preparation Workshop. Staff from all eligible districts and schools will be invited to learn about the National Research Council's report and how they can implement more effective strategies to ensure all children are reading by Grade 3. Florida is fortunate to have leading researchers in reading and literacy within the state who will be invited to present at this critical workshop.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

- ◆ **State Supported Professional Development.** Florida has identified a series of professional development activities and products to facilitate the use of scientifically based research on reading in Florida classrooms. Previous sections have described in detail the guide to be developed by Dr. Joseph Torgesen and Dr. Barbara Palmer and the preschool guide to instruction in emergent literacy by Dr. Christopher Lonigan. These documents and all of Florida's **FLaRE Initiative** will reflect the body of knowledge currently known about reading and emergent literacy.

- ◆ **FLaRE Initiative Regional Forums.** The regional forums will provide a platform for furthering knowledge about reading and literacy research as well as sharing practices that are working in Florida schools. Documents and reports containing scientifically based reading and family literacy research will be disseminated to all grant participants who attend the regional forums.
- ◆ **LEA Grants.** All grants funded through the Florida Reading Excellence Grant will be required to demonstrate an understanding of this body of knowledge and reflect the knowledge in their proposed practices. The LEA criteria specify that the proposals include documentation of scientifically based reading research, and no program will be funded if it does not meet or exceed this criterion.
- ◆ **Preservice and Inservice Courses in Reading Research.** The DOE will generate a syllabus, annotated bibliography, and course documentation for use at the preservice and inservice levels to train new teachers and returning teachers on the body of knowledge reflected in scientifically based reading and family literacy research. Earlier sections contain more detailed descriptions of this activity.
- ◆ **State Supported Research on Effective Reading Strategies for LEP Students.** The Florida DOE will launch a special research project with a rigorous research design to study Effective Reading Strategies for LEP Students. This research project will be conducted in conjunction with the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Center. As described earlier, it is anticipated that more than 500 LEP students will participate in this special study made possible by the unusual demographics of the South Florida region.

These multi-pronged approaches will ensure that all eligible school districts and schools are well-informed about the research on effective reading and family literacy instruction and the implications of that compiled research for practices in classrooms in Florida. The strategies also will generate documents that can be reprinted through other funds for use with all school districts and schools in Florida, thus serving a broader audience and increasing the effectiveness of the Reading Excellence Grant resources. The research study conducted with Limited English Proficiency children under the auspices of the grant includes specific requirements for scientific rigor of the study. The combined approaches are based upon a specific research design that is of high quality and appropriate for the State of Florida.

C.4. APPROPRIATENESS OF SERVICES FOR TARGETED POPULATIONS

C.4.A. LEA SUBGRANT APPLICATION AND PROCESS

The Florida DOE will conduct a competitive process to select and award Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance subgrant recipients among the eligible school districts according to the requirements of the Reading Excellence Act. Criteria for eligibility for the Local Reading Improvement subgrants will be local education agencies that either:

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

- (A) have at least one school that is identified for school improvement under section 1116(c) in the geographic area served by the agency;
- (B) have the largest, or second largest, number of children who are counted under section 1124(c), in comparison to all other local educational agencies in the State; or
- (C) have the highest, or second highest school-age child poverty rate, in comparison to all other local educational agencies in the State.

Criteria for eligibility for the Tutorial Assistance subgrants will be local education agencies:

- A) that have at least one school in the geographic area served by the agency that
 - i) is located in an area designated as an empowerment zone under part I of sub-chapter U of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; or
 - ii) is located in an area designated as an enterprise community under part I of sub-chapter U of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986
- B) that have at least one school that is identified for school improvement under section 1116(c) in the geographic area served by the agency
- C) with the largest, or second largest, number of children who are counted under section 1124(c), in comparison to all other local educational agencies in the State; or
- D) with the highest, or second highest school-age child poverty rate, in comparison to all other local educational agencies in the State.

Florida estimates that by July 1, 1999 when the Reading Excellence Grant would become effective, approximately 203 schools in 22 Florida counties would be eligible to apply for Local Reading Improvement and/or Tutorial Assistance subgrants. The exact number will be dependent upon results from spring testing during the current school year.

The process Florida will use in awarding Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance subgrants will be as follows:

- ◆ DOE staff notify eligible districts of grant availability.
- ◆ DOE staff send applications to eligible districts.
- ◆ DOE staff contracts for or conducts statewide preparation (pre-bid) workshop for eligible districts.
- ◆ DOE Office of School Improvement and Area Centers for Educational Enhancement provide technical assistance to eligible districts upon request.
- ◆ Districts submit grant proposals.
- ◆ DOE staff form a grant selection committee composed of non-DOE employees. Example representation may include members of the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership, district staff from non-eligible districts, university researchers knowledgeable in reading/family literacy research, school board members, parents serving on school advisory boards, and community members of school advisory boards. The grant selection committee will be formed to represent the diversity of the state's population.
- ◆ Grant selection committee reviews and ranks the submitted proposals.
- ◆ DOE staff recommends final set of grants to the Commissioner of Education
- ◆ Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership reviews list of selected subgrantees.
- ◆ Commissioner of Education approves final set of grant awards.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

- ◆ DOE staff notify selected school districts of grant awards.

The LEA application form and approval criteria for Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance subgrants are presented on the following pages. The Selection Criteria contain specific guidelines on basing judgments of the grants on scientifically based reading research. The Grant Selection Committee will contain members of Florida's state university system who have national reputations in conducting and publishing rigorous research studies on reading and family literacy.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

LOCAL READING IMPROVEMENT GRANT APPLICATION

PURPOSE

The Purpose of the Local Reading Improvement Grant is to:

1. provide children with the readiness skills they need to learn to read once they enter school.
2. teach every child to read in the child's early childhood years—
 - ◆ as soon as the child is ready to read; or
 - ◆ as soon as possible once the child enters school, but not later than third grade
3. improve the reading skills of students, and the instructional practices for current teachers (and as appropriate, other instructional staff) who teach reading, through the use of scientifically based reading research, including findings relating to phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency and reading comprehension.
4. expand the number of high-quality family literacy programs.
5. provide early literacy intervention to children who are experiencing reading difficulties in order to reduce the number of children who are incorrectly identified as a child with a disability and inappropriately referred to special education.

To accomplish these purposes, the subgrants supports four primary strategies:

1. professional development for classroom teachers and other instructional personnel
2. family literacy services based on the Even Start model
3. extended learning opportunities which may include before school, after school, weekends, extended year and during non-instructional time during the school day.
4. provide services to kindergarten students who are not ready to transition to first grade

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Limit this section to 20 pages using an 11 or 12 size font. Single or 1.5 line spacing is recommended. The applicant may address the topics listed below anywhere within the narrative and does not need to repeat information once stated.

The LEA shall provide a narrative description of how the applicant will ensure:

1. Describe how the LEA will work with schools: To select and implement reading instruction programs developed using scientifically based reading research, to improve reading instruction by all academic teachers for all children in each of the schools selected by the LEA, and where appropriate, for their parents.
2. Coordination and integration with existing programs and resources (Title I, Migrant, Adult Education and Family Literacy, Child Care Providers and Pre-school Programs such as Even Start, Head Start, Early Intervention, Exceptional Student Education and others as appropriate). Describe how such funds and resources available for reading instruction for kindergarten through grade six from other appropriate sources are effectively coordinated and, where appropriate, integrated with funds under this subgrant in order to improve existing activities in the areas of reading instruction, professional development, program improvement, parental involvement, technical assistance, and other activities that can help meet the purposes of this subgrant.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

LOCAL READING IMPROVEMENT GRANT APPLICATION (CONT.)

3. Involvement of parents; parents, tutors, and early childhood education providers will be assisted by, and participate in literacy related activities to enhance children's reading fluency.
4. Provision of instruction to children with reading difficulties who are at risk of being referred to special education based on these difficulties; or have been evaluated under section 614 of the Individuals with Disabilities Act but, have not been identified as being a child with a disability
5. Promotion of reading and library programs that provide access to engaging reading material
6. Provision upon request of information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teacher to provide instruction in reading.

Describe how the LEA will assure that allowable activities to advance reform of reading instruction will be implemented.

- A. Securing technical assistance from a program of reading instruction based on scientifically based reading research; a person or entity with experience or expertise about such program and its implementation, who has agreed to work with the recipient in connection with its implementation; or a program providing family literacy services.
- B. Providing professional development activities for classroom teachers and supervised instructional staff (including training of tutors) of sufficient quality and intensity to enable them to implement all components of balanced reading (phonological awareness, phonics/decoding, fluency and comprehension) instruction.
- C. Providing reading and library programs that provide access to engaging reading material.
- D. Providing, on a voluntary basis, training to parents of children enrolled in a school selected to receive assistance on how to help their children with schoolwork, particularly in reading.
- E. Carrying out family literacy services based on programs such as the Even Start family literacy model.
- F. Providing instruction for parents and others who volunteer to be reading tutors based on scientifically based reading research used by the applicant.
- G. Providing programs and services to kindergarten students who are not ready for the transition to first grade, especially those having difficulty with pre-reading skills.
- H. Providing additional support for children preparing to enter kindergarten and students in kindergarten through grade 3 who are experiencing reading difficulty, before school, after school, on weekends, during non-instructional periods of the school day or during the summer, using supervised individuals (including tutors) who have been trained using scientifically based reading research
- I. Providing instruction for children with specific instructional needs that will be sufficiently explicit, sufficiently intensive, and sufficiently comprehensive to effectively support adequate reading growth in these children.
- J. Providing coordination of reading, library, and literacy programs within the local educational agency to avoid duplication and increase the effectiveness of reading, library, and literacy activities.

Describe the Adequacy of Resources

- I. How the cost to person served ratio is reasonable
- II. Provide a budget for the proposed activities with sufficient detail and explanation to justify proposed expenditures.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

LOCAL READING IMPROVEMENT GRANT APPLICATION (CONT.)

Describe the Management Plan

- I. ensure a diversity of perspectives in the operation of the project
- II. ensure financially sound management

Describe the Plan for Evaluation

- I. include objective performance measures (student outcome data to include disaggregated sub-group data)
- II. describe performance feedback through periodic assessment
- III. include an agreement to participate in state research studies and evaluation data collection and reporting.

Describe how the LEA will address State Priorities

Priority will be given to LEA's providing:

- ◆ a coaching and mentoring model of staff development
- ◆ extended library hours, days, weeks based on the Florida Extended Access to Library Media Services Grants
- ◆ engaging multi-level classroom libraries and/or providing increased numbers of engaging multi-level books with in classrooms and school libraries.
- ◆ A partnership with one or more community-based organizations of demonstrated effectiveness in early childhood literacy, and reading readiness, reading instruction, and reading achievement for both adults and children.

Limitation on Administrative Expenses

A recipient of a subgrant may use not more than 5 percent funds for administrative costs.

Training Non-recipients

Subgrantees may train, on a fee-for-services basis, personnel from schools, or local educational agencies, that are not beneficiary of the grant in the instructional practices based on scientifically based reading research used by the recipient. Such non-recipient school or agency may use funds received under title I of this Act and other appropriate Federal funds used for reading instruction, to pay for such training, to the extent consistent with the law under which funds were received.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

LEA LOCAL READING IMPROVEMENT - CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Rate each item as indicated based on the adequacy of the proposal's objectives, activities and timelines as they relate to each of the following items. These items may be found throughout the project narrative. Maximum points are shown in parenthesis. Total possible points of 125 may be awarded.

How the planned activities will:

A. Significance (20 points)

- I. build the district's and selected school's capacity to improve, or expand services to address the needs of the targeted students.
 1. provide the approximate number of schools to be served; describe the basis for selection
 2. provide the approximate number of children to be served, include grade levels and selection criteria as appropriate
- II. implements the intent of the Reading Excellence Act including the stated purposes to:
 1. provide children with the readiness skills they need to learn to read once they enter school.
 2. teach every child to read in the child's early childhood years—
 - ◆ as soon as the child is ready to read; or
 - ◆ as soon as possible once the child enters school, but not later than third grade
 3. improve the reading skills of students, and the instructional practices for current teachers (and as appropriate, other instructional staff) who teach reading, through the use of scientifically based reading research, including findings relating to phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency and reading comprehension.
 4. expand the number of high-quality family literacy programs.
 5. provide early literacy intervention to children who are experiencing reading difficulties in order to reduce the number of children who are incorrectly identified as a child with a disability and inappropriately referred to special education.

B. Quality of Design (30 points)

- I. Coordination with existing programs and resources (Title I, Migrant, Adult Education and Family Literacy, Child Care Providers and Pre-school Programs such as Even Start, Head Start, Early Intervention, Exceptional Student Education and others as appropriate)
- II. Reflection of up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice
- III. Selection/development of project is based on rigorous scientifically based research.
- IV. Reflection of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and high academic standards. This comprehensive effort must address state goals and standards, district goals and standards and the school's Improvement Plans
- V. Encouragement of meaningful parent involvement in the planning and implementation of the project and to include assisting the parent to become their child's first teacher

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

LEA LOCAL READING IMPROVEMENT - CRITERIA FOR SELECTION (CONT.)

C. Quality of Services (35 points)

- I. Staff development is of sufficient quality, intensity and duration to improve teaching skills.
(Utilizes staff development strategies that scientifically-based research indicates is effective. Individuals or groups contracted to provide technical assistance must also use these scientifically based reading research strategies).
- II. Technical assistance services to be provided involve the use of efficient strategies, including the use of technology.
- III. Services of the project reflect up-to-date research and knowledge of effective practice.
- IV. Services are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients.
- V. Collaboration of appropriate partners maximizes the effectiveness of project services.

D. Adequacy of Resources (5 points)

- I. Cost-to-person served ratio is reasonable
- II. Budget is reasonable and appropriate for the proposed activities

E. Quality of Management Plan (5 points)

- I. ensure a diversity of perspectives in the operation of the project
- II. ensure financially sound management

F. Evaluation (15 points)

- I. includes objective performance measures (student outcome data to include disaggregated sub-group data)
- II. performance feedback through periodic assessment (what is working and what is not so that others don't have to make the same mistake)
- III. includes an agreement to participate in state research studies and evaluation data collection and reporting.

H. Special Rule (5 points)

- I. To the extent feasible, the proposal includes formation of a partnership with one or more community-based organizations of demonstrated effectiveness in early childhood literacy, and reading readiness, reading instruction, and reading achievement for both adults and children.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE GRANT PROJECT APPLICATION

Project Design for Tutorial Assistance (TA) Subgrant (Limit Project Design to 20 pages.)

Use of Funds

- (1) An LEA that receives a subgrant will use the funds provided for each of the following duties. The duties described in this paragraph are for the provision of TA in reading, before school, after school, on weekends, or during the summer, to children who have difficulty reading, using instructional practices developed using scientifically based reading research. Describe how the LEA will ensure:
 - a. The creation and implementation of objective criteria to determine in a uniform manner the eligibility of TA providers and TA programs desiring to provide TA under the subgrant. Such criteria shall include the following:
 - (i) A record of effectiveness with respect to reading readiness, reading instruction for children in kindergarten through grade three, and early childhood literacy, as appropriate.
 - (ii) Location in a geographic area convenient to the school or schools attended by the children who will be receiving TA.
 - (iii) The ability to provide tutoring in reading to children who have difficulty reading, using instructional practices developed using scientifically based reading research and consistent with the reading instructional methods and content used by the school the child attends.
 1. provide the approximate number of schools to be served; describe the basis for selection
 2. provide the approximate number of children to be served, include grade levels and selection criteria as appropriate

The provision to parents of a child eligible to receive TA shall include a school-based program and at least one TA program operated by a provider in a contract with an LEA.

Contract Procedures Development

- (1) Describe how the LEA will provide information to parents of an eligible child regarding such parents' choices for TA for the child.
- (2) Describe how the LEA will consider children for TA who are identified by the school the child attends, as having difficulty reading, including difficulty mastering phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension and for whom **no parent** has selected a TA provider or TA program that gives such parents additional opportunities to select a TA provider or TA program operated by a provider in a contract with an LEA; and
- (3) Describe how the LEA will recommend a TA provider or TA program in a case where a parent asks for assistance in the making of such selection.
- (4) Describe the development of a selection process for providing TA that limits the provision of assistance to children identified, by the school the child attends, as having difficulty reading, including difficulty mastering phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension.
- (5) Describe the development of procedures for selecting children to receive TA, to be used in cases where insufficient funds are available to provide assistance with respect to all children identified by the school the child attends, as having difficulty reading, including difficulty mastering phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension that give priority to children who are determined, through state or local reading assessments, to be:
 - a. Most in need of TA; and
 - b. Equally in need of TA, based on a random selection principle.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE GRANT PROJECT APPLICATION (CONT.)

Contract Development

- (1) The development of a methodology by which payments are made directly to TA providers who are identified and selected for funding. Such methodology shall include the making of a contract, consistent with state and local law, between the provider and the LEA. The contract shall contain:
 - a. Specific goals and timetables with respect to the performance of the TA provider.
 - b. Require the TA provider to report to the LEA on the provider's performance in meeting goals and timetables.
 - c. Specify the measurement techniques that will be used to evaluate the performance of the provider.
 - d. Require provider to meet all applicable Federal, state, & local health, safety, & civil rights laws.
 - e. Ensure that the TA provided under the contract is consistent with reading instruction and content used by the LEA.
 - f. An agreement by the provider that information regarding the identity of any child eligible for, or enrolled in the program, will not be publicly disclosed without the permission of the parent.
 - g. The terms of an agreement between the provider and the LEA with respect to the provider's purchase and maintenance of adequate general liability insurance; and
 - h. Provisions with respect to the making of payments to the provider by the LEA.
- (2) For the development of procedures of the TA contract the LEA will:
 - a. Ensure oversight of the quality and effectiveness of the TA provided by each TA provider that is selected for funding.
 - b. Provide for the termination of contracts with ineffective and unsuccessful TA providers (as determined by the LEA based upon the performance of the provider with respect to the goals and timetables contained in the contract between the agency) and the provider consistent with state and local laws.
 - c. Provide to each parent of a child identified by the school the child attends, as having difficulty reading, including difficulty mastering phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension who requests such information for the purpose of selecting a TA provider for the child, in a comprehensible format, information with respect to the quality and effectiveness of the TA.
 - d. Ensure that each school identifying a child by the school the child attends, as having difficulty reading, including difficulty mastering phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension will provide upon request, to a parent of the child, assistance in selecting, from among the TA providers who are best able to meet the needs of the child.
 - e. Ensure that parents of a child receiving TA are informed of their child's progress in the tutorial program; and
 - f. Ensure that it does not disclose the name of any child who may be eligible for TA, the name of any parent of such a child, or any other personally identifiable information about such a parent or child, to any TA provider (excluding the LEA itself), without the prior written consent of the parent.

Institutionalizing Project Elements Beyond the Third and Final year of Funding (Limit this section to 6 pages.)

Given the previous summary of the project's primary needs, the activities implemented to meet those needs, and the methods used to determine the project's success, describe the planning process or the plan in place to meet these needs in the future after external funding is no longer available.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

LEA TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE GRANT - CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The Tutorial Assistance grant selection criteria is a modified version of the Reading Improvement criteria. Changes are shown in italics.

Rate each item as indicated based on the adequacy of the proposal's objectives, activities and timelines as they relate to each of the following items. These items may be found throughout the project narrative. Maximum points are shown in parenthesis. Total possible points of 110 may be awarded.

How the planned activities will:

A. Significance (20 points)

- I. build the districts and selected schools capacity to improve, or expand services to address the needs of the targeted students.
- II. implement the intent of the Reading Excellence Act including the stated purposes to:
 1. provide children with the readiness skills they need to learn to read once they enter school.
 2. teach every child to read in the child's early childhood years—
 - ◇ as soon as the child is ready to read; or
 - ◇ as soon as possible once the child enters school, but not later than third grade
 3. improve the reading skills of students, and the instructional practices for current teachers(and as appropriate, other instructional staff) who teach reading, through the use of scientifically based reading research, including findings relating to phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency and reading comprehension.
 4. *expand the number of high-quality family literacy programs. DELETED*
 5. provide early literacy intervention to children who are experiencing reading difficulties in order to reduce the number of children who are incorrectly identified as a child with a disability and inappropriately referred to special education

B. Quality of Design (30 points)

- I. coordination with existing programs and resources (Title I, Migrant, Adult Education and Family Literacy, Child Care Providers and Pre-school Programs such as Even Start, Head Start, Early Intervention, Exceptional Student Education and others as appropriate). Provide detailed information regarding coordination of the TA activities with ongoing regular school curriculum and instruction
- II. reflect up to date knowledge from research and effective practice
- III. selection of providers and instructional tutorial materials is based on rigorous scientifically based research
- IV. reflects a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and high academic standards. This comprehensive effort must address State goals and standards, District goals and standards and the School's Improvement Plans

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

LEA TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE GRANT - CRITERIA FOR SELECTION (CONT.)

- V. encourages meaningful parent involvement in the planning and implementation of the project and to include assisting the parent to become their child's first teacher
- C. Quality of Services **(35 points)**
 - I. staff development and especially the training of tutors is of sufficient quality, intensity and duration to improve teaching skills. (Utilizes staff development strategies that scientifically-based research indicates is effective. Individuals or groups contracted to provide technical assistance must also use these scientifically based reading research strategies)
 - II. technical assistance services to be provided involve the use of efficient strategies, including the use of technology
 - III. services of project reflect up-to-date research and knowledge of effective practice.
 - IV. services are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients
 - V. collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.
- D. Adequacy of Resources **(5 points)**
 - I. cost to person served ratio is reasonable
 - II. provide a budget for the proposed activities with sufficient detail and explanation to justify proposed expenditures
- E. Quality of Management Plan **(5 points)**
 - I. ensure a diversity of perspectives in the operation of the project
 - II. ensure financially sound management
- F. Evaluation **(15 points)**
 - I. includes objective performance measures (student outcome data to include disaggregated sub-group data)
 - II. performance feedback through periodic assessment (what is working and what is not so that others don't have to make the same mistake)
 - III. includes an agreement to participate in state research studies and evaluation data collection and reporting.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

C.4.B APPROPRIATENESS

Addressing the problems of breaking the cycle of illiteracy and poverty in Florida requires a diversity of programs aimed at many populations. The Reading Excellence Act provides for LEA subgrants that target high poverty districts and schools. State review of the LEA subgrants will ensure that the planned programs are appropriate for the targeted populations specified in the proposals. Each proposal must demonstrate that the planned services are a direct outgrowth of scientifically based reading and family literacy research.

These local grants will convey most of the effort in improving reading and family literacy across Florida. Ripple effects, however, will impact on all children through the Reading and Family Literacy Summits, the regional Forums on Reading and Family Literacy, and the extensive staff development and technical assistance materials and programs that will be made available through other fund sources for all districts and schools in Florida.

C.4.C. DIVERSITY OF LEAS AND SCHOOLS SERVED

Florida is a very diverse state with 7 of the 25 largest school systems in the nation but also with more than 25 school districts with student populations less than 10,000. The distribution of high poverty areas in many of the rural districts will result in more than half of the eligible school districts being in rural areas with high minority student populations. Excluding the eligibility criterion related to school improvement under Title I, districts that would currently be eligible include Dade and Broward Counties (two very large and very diverse school districts), and Gadsden and Hendry Counties (two very small, rural counties with more than 60% minority populations).

C.4.D EQUAL ACCESS AND TREATMENT

Every eligible school district in Florida will be given equal opportunities to submit Local Reading Improvement and/or Tutorial Assistance subgrant applications. The DOE will contract for or conduct a statewide preparation (pre-bid) workshop for all eligible districts to provide them with extensive understanding about the underlying purposes of the Reading Excellence Act, the body of scientifically based knowledge on reading and family literacy that has emerged in the last decade, and the sources for technical assistance in preparing a proposal for a subgrant. The DOE Office of School Improvement and Area Centers for Educational Enhancement will provide technical assistance to each eligible district upon request. Community based organizations will be included in information about the grant program and encouraged to participate in all pre-bid activities. Through these processes, the DOE will ensure equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability.

C.5. COLLABORATION OF PARTNERS

The Partnership, in conjunction with a **FLaRE** Initiative Implementation Committee, will coordinate the efforts of the **FLaRE** Initiative with similar and related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State and federal resources. At its semi-annual meetings, the Partnership will hear reports concerning new efforts from these varied areas, address issues and concerns related to collaboration and cooperation, and work cooperatively as a group to reduce the barriers to implementing scientifically

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

based reading and family literacy research efforts across the state. Additional major related efforts and resources are identified in earlier sections of this proposal.

D. READING EXCELLENCE GRANT RESOURCES

In this section we address the reasonableness of the requested resources to provide adequately for the planned activities. As a commitment to providing as much assistance as possible to students through state, LEA and school efforts, Florida will not retain the 17% allowable indirect cost (\$71,000) but flow these funds through directly to project initiatives. Also, Florida's legislature has just funded a \$15 million reading initiative so that other needy schools may be able to obtain assistance. In this way, the impact of the federal funds from the Reading Excellence Act will be extended and maximized.

The proposed budget presented in Part II addresses three years of extensive state efforts (refer to Sections A, B, and C of the program narrative for details). Florida anticipates that up to 220 elementary schools in up to 27 school districts will be eligible for Reading Improvement or TAG subgrants. Florida's median elementary school population is 720 students. If all eligible schools were selected for funding, an estimated 158,400 students would directly benefit from the Reading Excellence Grant and the per student grant amount would be approximately \$164. Florida anticipates awarding approximately 120 subgrants on a competitive basis at an approximate funding level of \$200,000 per grant, a level sufficient to make a significant impact on teaching and learning in the classrooms.

E. READING EXCELLENCE GRANT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The administration of this grant will be integrated within the existing Department organizational structure to avoid creating new structures and hierarchies for administration of federal grants. The **FLaRE** coordinator will be located in an integral part of the DOE's existing mechanism for providing leadership, guidance and support for curriculum and instruction, the Bureau of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. This placement within the Division of Public Schools will assure the integration of the Reading Excellence Act efforts with other efforts throughout the Department of Education to provide a seamless approach to ensuring that all children become accomplished readers by the end of grade three. The administrative expertise of the Department will also ensure fiscal accountability for the funds. Systematic monitoring of the subgrants by DOE staff and the comprehensive statewide evaluation with local evaluation reports will ensure implementation of planned grant activities in accordance with the requirements and intent of the Reading Excellence Act.

The **FLaRE** Initiative, however, will not be limited to the Department of Education. The high visibility of this initiative generated through the multi-organizational Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership will signal to all participants that ensuring reading skills for all Florida children is a responsibility shared by all groups and organizations impacting on young children, especially those living in poverty or exposed to other high risk factors. The Partnership and the Initiative Workgroup will facilitate coordination and management of all grant activities to further the intent of the Reading Excellence Act.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

The Florida Reading and Literacy Center will be contracted through a major university as the result of a structured RFP. Once established, the Center will communicate and coordinate with the **FLaRE** coordinator and will be directly responsible to the Office of the Deputy Commissioner for Educational Programs, who is also responsible for the Division of Public Schools.

The following timeline for project implementation is proposed.

- August 1999 - Florida Statewide Reading and Literacy Summit (Already scheduled regardless of grant award.)
- September 1999 - Formal notification to districts and community service providers of subgrant availability and eligibility criteria
- October 1, 1999 - Statewide Subgrant Preparation Workshop
- October 1999 - Subgrant Preparation Workshop
- December 1, 1999 - Deadline for LEA submission
- January 1, 2000 - Subgrant Award and notification
- March-April 2000 - Regional Forums
- June 2000 - Subgrant evaluation submittal
- March-April 2001 - Regional Forums
- June 2001 - Subgrant evaluation submittal
- March-April 2002 - Regional Forums
- June 2002 - Subgrant evaluation submittal

F. READING EXCELLENCE GRANT PROJECT EVALUATION

A comprehensive, long-term evaluation of the implementation and outcomes of the Reading Excellence Grant program in Florida will be conducted in a private/public collaboration with Evaluation Systems Design, Inc. (ESDI). The evaluation will incorporate and integrate formative and summative components, and will examine the processes used in purposefully selected LEA local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance subgrants as well as the outcomes from all schools and districts.

Evaluation Systems Design, Inc. is a Florida-based certified firm with more than 20 years of experience conducting professional evaluations of innovative education and human services programs across the nation. Examples of evaluations conducted that relate to this effort include:

- ◆ Florida - Statewide Evaluation of the Impact of Recent Legislation on Young Children in Florida (comprehensive evaluation of six early childhood programs including First Start and Even Start)
- ◆ Illinois - Statewide Evaluation of the Reading Improvement Program
- ◆ IBM -Evaluation of the Writing to Write Program at 26 sites across the nation
- ◆ Florida – Statewide evaluation of the Area Centers for Educational Enhancement, regional training and technical assistance centers.
- ◆ Virginia – statewide evaluation of all special education programs
- ◆ IBM – Development of all off-line products, materials, and teacher's guide for the nationally distributed Writing To Read 2000 program
- ◆ Illinois – statewide evaluation of staff development programs
- ◆ Florida – local evaluations of Even Start programs in Pinellas, Orange, and Brevard counties
- ◆ Florida – evaluation of the Head Start program in Palm Beach County

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

Dr. Constance C. Bergquist, President of ESDI, has been President of the Southeast Evaluation Association, President of the Florida Educational Research Association, and served as the Chair of the Research and Evaluation Committee for the American Evaluation Association for three years. Staff for the **FLaRE** evaluation will include four noted evaluators including those with Ph.D.s in evaluation and with expertise in reading, elementary education, and early childhood programs.

F.1. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Initial evaluation questions for the statewide evaluation are:

1. To what extent did each funded project meet its grant objectives?
2. To what extent did each funded project implement programs founded on scientifically based reading research?
3. How effective were the processes used by the grant programs?
4. What similarities and differences were noted in the processes used by the grant programs?
5. What impact did the Reading Excellence Grant programs have on students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community involvement?
6. To what extent did teachers incorporate appropriate reading instructional strategies into their classroom practices?
7. To what extent did the reading levels of students participating in the grant activities increase?
8. To what extent were programs targeted at diverse populations in Florida successful in closing the gap in reading levels?
9. To what extent did the Reading Excellence Grant programs reduce the referral and identification rates of students for special education programs?
10. To what extent did the programs impact system change?

The Department will work cooperatively with the Partnership and the evaluators to identify additional evaluation questions.

F.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

To the extent feasible and appropriate for the individual grants, each funded subgrant will be asked to identify within the district or surrounding districts a comparable school with similar school demographics to serve as a control school for the outcome evaluation. Reading scores for selected students within each pair of schools will be analyzed over three years in a pretest-posttest comparison group design to determine the impact of the Reading Improvement or Tutorial Assistance subgrants. These results will then be available to contribute to the broader body of scientific reading research.

F.3. DATA COLLECTION

The Department will work with the Partnership and the evaluators to identify or develop specific instruments to use for data collection. These instruments will include:

- ◆ standardized instruments for assessing phonemic awareness, word reading proficiency, and reading comprehension
- ◆ student achievement including school test scores on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and Florida Writes!

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

- ◆ student achievement including school test scores on locally administered standardized achievement tests
- ◆ surveys on program implementation of students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members
- ◆ interviews with key stakeholders at sites by trained evaluators
- ◆ school and classroom observations at sites of student-teacher interactions to document the scientifically based reading instruction being implemented

To assist in standardizing the data collection, the Department will select, adapt, or develop a standardized diagnostic assessment instrument for use by teachers and other school personnel to determine student skills in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonemic decoding and fluent word recognition, and passage comprehension in the primary grades. This instrument will be required to be administered in local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance subgrants serving primary grade students.

The evaluators will generate a matrix identifying for each evaluation question the appropriate instrument(s) for data collection and develop a schedule for data collection to be used at each site. Baseline data will be collected prior to the initiation of any project activities to ensure that the evaluation captures the entire impact of the Reading Excellence grant programs. At the end of the second and third years, posttest data will be collected to provide comprehensive reports across all sites. Value added will be estimated by comparing increases in test scores at **FLaRE** sites with test scores at comparison sites.

Onsite visits will be conducted to a purposefully selected sample of 25% of the funded subgrants each year. The sampling will be conducted to represent a variety of reading improvement strategies, rural and urban settings, geographical distribution across the state, and diversity of populations served. While onsite, evaluators will interview key decision-makers and faculty, review progress on implementation of the planned strategies, observe reading instruction in classrooms, and conduct focus group meetings with teachers and parents.

All data collection will be coordinated and supervised by an evaluator with extensive experience in conducting evaluations.

F.4. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analyses will be conducted using methods appropriate for the types of data generated. For the qualitative data, content analyses will be conducted of responses to surveys and interview questions according to facets and factors relevant to each project and across the four projects. Observational data will be reviewed to document the types and nature of interactions observed. For quantitative data, descriptive statistics of means, percentages, and counts will be used for most of the types of data collected. Pretest-posttest comparison analyses will be conducted as appropriate on the standardized achievement test data using parametric statistics (ANOVA or ANACOVA). Statistical significance will be determined using a $p < .05$ significance level.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

F.5. REPORTING

The evaluators will generate formative evaluation reports at the end of the first two years of the Reading Excellence grant programs. These reports will document the processes being used by Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance subgrants to implement their selected reading improvement programs, record progress for the subgrants on their implementation plans, and provide recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the Reading Excellence grant programs and potential impacts on students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community. They will include addressing value added data analyses by comparing the prior target population growth rates with the Reading Excellence Act (Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance Grant) growth rates. These reports and the cross-site analyses will be shared with the Partnership for their ongoing review and oversight.

The final, summative evaluation report will be generated at the conclusion of the third year of implementation to document the outcomes and impacts of the Reading Excellence programs at all sites and draw conclusions across all sites. The final report will contain results in narrative, tabular, and graphic forms and will be written in a style easily understood by educators. An executive summary written for a general audience will be generated for widespread distribution to educators, parents, and community leaders.

F.6. DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

Interim reports and the final report from the evaluation will be disseminated to all funded projects and made available to educators throughout Florida. Oral reports will be provided by the evaluators to the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership at their regular meetings. All documents from the evaluation will be deposited with the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Center and made available online to the broader education community.

F.7 USE OF OBJECTIVE PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Each school district will be required to use the reading subtest of a standardized assessment test as an objective performance measure in a pretest-posttest design in April of 2000, 2001 and 2002. The April, 2000 measure will serve as a pretest for the project with two posttests in April, 2001 and April, 2002. A set of acceptable achievement tests will be developed from which the districts will chose a measure.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA’S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

F.8. PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK AND PERIODIC ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The evaluators will generate surveys to be used by all subgrantees that document these factors:

- ◆ staff development received by faculty on reading and family literacy
- ◆ technical assistance on reading and family literacy received from the district or Area Centers
- ◆ changes in teaching behaviors and skills that reflect scientifically based reading and family literacy research
- ◆ changes in attitudes towards teaching reading and family literacy
- ◆ parental involvement in reading and family literacy programs
- ◆ community involvement in reading and family literacy programs
- ◆ critical implementation needs
- ◆ benefits of the program for faculty, students, and parents

Administration of these surveys by the subgrantees will result in consistent data collection and allow for cross-site analyses by type of program being implemented. Each subgrant will be required to submit an annual report on progress using a format developed by the evaluators. The evaluators will summarize these results across all sites to generate annual comprehensive reports on progress across subgrants.

F.9 EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

Each subgrantee will be required to administer in Kindergarten to Grade 3 (or the grade levels specifically targeted by the subgrant activities) the reading subtest of a standardized achievement test as a pretest and posttest of student reading level. In Florida, school districts typically use a norm-referenced test to measure student achievement on an annual basis. These tests are routinely administered by school districts across the state in Grades 4 and 8:

- ◆ Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), Form A
- ◆ California Achievement Test (CAT), Form A
- ◆ Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), Form K
- ◆ Comprehensive Assessment Program, National Achievement Test (NAT), Form 3
- ◆ Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), Forms J and L

More than half of the school districts administer the CTBS, and four of the seven largest districts (Dade, Broward, Hillsborough and Orange) administer the SAT, Form J. The DOE anticipates that most districts will use one or two of the above listed tests. The evaluation of the Florida Reading Excellence Act subgrant efforts will use the results from these assessments as part of the longitudinal comprehensive evaluation to document changes in reading levels across the state in schools implementing subgrants.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

In addition, within the first year of the grant, through its literacy center, Florida will develop the Florida Early Reading Assessment (described in Section A.5.f) to measure phonological awareness, systematic phonics, fluency and comprehension. This diagnostic measure will be designed for administration by classroom teachers to children in Kindergarten to second grade to determine potential deficits in skills so that students can be referred for more intensive preventive treatment and avoid potential inappropriate referral for special education programs. All subgrantees will be required to use this test with students targeted for intensive or tutorial activities for pre testing and post-testing.

An additional source of data on changes in student proficiency levels in reading will be the new "value added" analyses that are being planned for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment System. These analyses will document for each school the increases in reading and other areas that have resulted from improvements in the educational programs at the school.

Additional instruments to be used in the evaluation include surveys of district staff, principals, and teachers in the subgrantee schools, and interview guides for the onsite visits conducted by the evaluators. These instruments are described in Section F.3 and will be developed upon grant award to the DOE.

G. READING EXCELLENCE GRANT ASSURANCES

Florida offers the following assurances in relation to the Reading Excellence Grant:

1. Each local educational agency to which the State educational agency makes a subgrant
 - i. Will provide professional development for the classroom teacher and other appropriate instructional staff on the teaching of reading based on scientifically based reading research.
 - ii. Will provide family literacy services based on programs such as the Even Start family literacy model authorized under part b of title I, to enable parents to be their child's first and most important teacher.
 - iii. Will carry out programs to assist those kindergarten students who are not ready for the transition to first grade, particularly students experiencing difficulty with reading skills; and
 - iv. Will use supervised individuals (including tutors), who have been appropriately trained using scientifically based reading research, to provide additional support, before school, after school, on weekends, during non instructional periods of the school day, or during the summer, for children preparing to enter kindergarten and students in kindergarten through grade 3 who are experiencing difficulty reading.
2. Instruction in reading will be provided to children with reading difficulties who
 - i. Are at risk of being referred to special education based on these difficulties; or
 - ii. Have been evaluated under section 614 of the Individuals with disabilities Education Act but, in accordance with section 614(b)(5) of such Act, have not been identified as being a child with a disability (as defined in section 602 of such Act).

Additional assurances:

1. In order to ensure that the LEA proposals funded do indeed provide professional development based upon scientifically based reading research, selection criteria will include documentation that all instructional changes to be supported by the grant, including new curriculum materials and teacher training content and practices, are consistent with research on reading, and no program will be funded if it does not meet or exceed the criteria for determination.

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

2. In order to ensure that the LEA proposals funded do indeed provide family literacy services based upon programs such as the Even Start family literacy model, selection criteria will include documentation of such family literacy components and no program will be funded if it does not meet or exceed the criteria for determination. Furthermore, districts will be required to show that their efforts to improve family literacy services will include specific enhancements to the content of these programs to include activities that will stimulate the development of phonological awareness, improve knowledge of letters and print concepts, and increase expressive and recaptive vocabulary.
3. In order to ensure that the LEA proposals funded do indeed provide programs that assist those kindergarten students who are not ready for the transition to first grade, particularly students experiencing difficulty with reading, selection criteria will require that districts describe specific procedures to enhance phonemic awareness, knowledge of letter names and sounds, and oral language vocabulary, and no program will be funded if it does not meet or exceed the criteria for determination.
4. Every funded Local Reading Improvement or Tutorial Assistance subgrant will use supervised individuals who have been trained to provide both assessment and instruction that is consistent with current, scientifically based knowledge about reading. Districts will be required to show how instruction for children with specific instructional needs will be sufficiently explicit, sufficiently intensive, and sufficiently comprehensive to effectively support adequate reading growth in these children. Funds will be used to provide additional support, before school, after school, on weekends, during non-instructional periods of the school day, or during the summer, for children preparing to enter kindergarten and students in kindergarten through grade 3 who are experiencing difficulty in learning to read. The grant selection criteria will include demonstration of such program components and no program will be funded if it does not meet or exceed the criteria for determination.
5. Funding will only be given to proposals that certify that they will form a partnership with one or more community-based organizations of demonstrated effectiveness in early childhood literacy, and reading readiness, reading instruction, and reading achievement for both adults and children, such as a Head Start program, family literacy program, public library, or adult education program, to carry out the functions of the grant, or provide information on why it would not have been feasible for the applicant to have done so.

Florida also recognizes and will include in its directions to eligible local school districts the following concept related to tutors: although volunteer tutors can provide valuable practice and motivational support for children learning to read, they should not be expected either to provide primary reading instruction or to instruct children with serious reading problems. Appropriate training will also be required prior to tutors working with children.

The Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Service provides statewide leadership in meeting the needs of students with special needs. The Bureau has expanded its emphasis in training and technical assistance materials to focus on all teachers—not just Exceptional Student Education (ESE) teachers. The rationale for this expanded emphasis is that if teachers have more tools for instructing students who don't respond to traditional instruction, teachers will use them on all students not just ESE students. The Bureau also is emphasizing using problem solving techniques to design appropriate interventions for students in pre referral and in ESE interventions. Research studies have demonstrated that the use of this strategy has reduced the number of ESE referrals and improved student performance because of identifying problems early before students fail miserably. The Effective

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

Instructional Practices Project, supported by the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Service, maintains a cadre of trainers in research based effective practices proven to improve ESE and often other students performance.

The **FLaRE** Initiative will work collaboratively with special education and reading experts to develop or acquire assessment instruments and to train teachers to administer them, to prevent students from being inappropriately referred to ESE. The **FLaRE** Initiative also will provide staff development in scientifically based reading research for K-3 teachers so that high quality reading instruction is provided by teachers who can apply principles expertly to individual children who are having difficulty learning to read. Other staff development activities have been specified in previous sections of this proposal.

H. READING EXCELLENCE GRANT DESCRIPTION AND ASSURANCES ON COORDINATION WITH LITERACY PROGRAMS

Florida offers the following assurances in relation to the Reading Excellence Grant:

The Florida Partnership and DOE will build on, and promote coordination among, literacy programs in the state (including federally funded programs such as the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and the Individuals with Disabilities education Act), in order to increase

- i. The effectiveness of the programs in improving reading for adults and children and to avoid duplication of the efforts of the programs;
- ii. Will promote reading and library programs that provide access to engaging reading materials;
- iii. Will make eligible local educational agencies aware of the availability of Local reading Improvement and Tutorial assistance Subgrants; and
- iv. Will assess and evaluate, on a regular basis, local education agency activities supported by the Reading Excellence Act.

Representation on the Florida Reading and Family Literacy Partnership of many partners will ensure broad coordination of the **FLaRE** Initiative with adult and family literacy programs. Every effort will be made to work collaboratively with the following groups as previously described in this proposal:

- ◆ Even Start Family Literacy
- ◆ Florida First Start Program
- ◆ Title I Programs and Services
- ◆ Migrant Education programs and services
- ◆ Emergency Immigrant Education and ESOL programs and services
- ◆ State Reading Improvement grants
- ◆ Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Projects
- ◆ Carl Perkins programs
- ◆ School-to-Work efforts
- ◆ Gender Equity efforts
- ◆ Goals 2000 grants targeting improvements in reading instruction.
- ◆ Drug Free Schools and Communities efforts
- ◆ Business Partnerships for districts and schools
- ◆ Volunteer Organizations and programs

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

- ◆ Florida Department of Education Offices and Programs including the Office of School Improvement, Evaluation and Reporting Services, Instructional Technology, and Exceptional Student Education and the Bureau of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
- ◆ Education of Homeless Children and Youth programs
- ◆ State and Regional Coordinating Councils for Early Childhood Services
- ◆ South East Region Vision for Education (SERVE)
- ◆ Region XIV Comprehensive Assistance Center
- ◆ Florida Reading and Family Literacy Center
- ◆ Preservice Education Programs in Florida's Colleges of Education
- ◆ Regional Area Centers for Educational Enhancement

Representatives of these and other related services and programs will serve on the **FLaRE** Initiative Implementation Committee. Many of these representatives have assisted in reviewing drafts of the Reading Excellence Grant proposal and provided extensive input into the conceptualization of the comprehensive **FLaRE** Initiative. The Implementation Committee will meet at least quarterly to share information and address issues and concerns during the process of awarding LEA grants, monitoring implementation, and reviewing evaluation results.

In addition, the application requirements for LEAs will include requirements for coordination at the local and regional levels between the **FLaRE** funded grants and the local programs and services listed above. LEA proposals will be required to identify the specific coordination activities to be conducted between the proposed Reading Excellence Subgrant and the currently funded Goals 2000 Continuation Projects targeting reading instruction. Currently eight districts have Elementary Reading Grants and eight districts Secondary Reading Grants. Coordination between these various groups will be a component of the comprehensive evaluation.

I. COMPETITIVE PRIORITY

Recognizing the criticality of reading to every Floridian's personal future and the effectiveness of the state as a whole, the 1997 Florida Legislature, with the support of the Governor and the Florida Department of Education, passed strong legislation to support rigorous academic standards for students. Conference Bill 1956 and Conference Substitute for Senate Bill 458 revised Florida Statute 232.245 to provide requirements that:

- ◆ ensure early annual assessment of children's reading abilities
- ◆ provide intensive reading instruction to those children not meeting a district standard
- ◆ ensure that children are not promoted without having learned to read at appropriate grade levels

This year's major emphasis of the Governor and the Commissioner of Education is on the A+ Plan for Florida's schools. In the A+ Plan, all schools must meet rigorous standards of student performance levels on statewide standardized achievement tests including the performance levels of the sub-populations that are often masked by higher performing levels of the majority populations in some schools. The Commissioner of Education's budget proposal for 1999-2000 contains a request for funds to support reading activities necessary to meet the intensive reading instruction required by F.S. 232.245. A

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

separate request in the budget proposal addresses major increases in funding for preschool reading readiness activities for emergent readers. The Reading Excellence Grant resources will be used

to coordinate and expand on these legislative and budget efforts to create a comprehensive system for supporting rigorous academic standards for children in the areas of reading and family literacy.

The State of Florida is committed to demonstrating a statewide focus in the area of reading and family literacy. A critical component in effecting change in the ways that students are taught to read is retraining teachers in the scientifically based reading research on reading and family literacy instruction. Florida has already made major changes in the teacher certification requirements regarding reading and will be enacting additional regulations increasing the rigor of these requirements. Current specialization requirements for certification in Elementary Education (grades 1-6) specify three semester hours in methods and materials for teaching reading at the elementary or primary level to include credit in each of the following:

1. Sequential developmental skills and concepts of reading
2. Recognition and diagnosis of reading problems
3. Prescription and utilization of appropriate methods and materials to increase reading performance.

Florida also has Subject Matter Content Standards for Teachers that have been established by the Florida Education Standards Commission. The standards are used as:

- ◆ A tool in the continued approval of teacher education programs
- ◆ An aid in the articulation of program content between community colleges and four year institutions
- ◆ Descriptors usable in the alternative teacher education and alternative certification processes
- ◆ The foundational standards used for the development of subject matter certification examinations in the Florida teacher certification process.

Because the Florida Teacher Certification Examination uses these standards as the foundation for the subject matter certification examinations, they are key tools in changing teacher preparation in reading and family literacy.

MAY 6, 1999
FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

**SUBJECT MATTER CONTENT STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

READING

1.4. Reading process.

The elementary teacher understands:

- 1.4.5. Cueing system – graphemes, phonemes, semantics, syntax.
- 1.4.6. Prediction of a passage based on its title and illustrations.
- 1.4.7. Purpose of table of contents, index, headings, captions, and illustrations.
- 1.4.8. Strategies of phonics, synonyms, antonyms, suffixes, prefixes, word structure, multiple meanings, root words, context clues to construct meaning from text and illustrations.
- 1.4.9. Comprehension by rereading, summarizing, and retelling.

1.5. Constructing meaning from a wide range of text e.g., fiction, non-fiction, poetry.

The elementary teacher understands:

- 1.5.1. Main idea and relevant supporting details.
- 1.5.2. Predicting and inferring from ideas in the text.
- 1.5.3. Placing events in sequential order when necessary.
- 1.5.4. How to determine cause and effect relationships
- 1.5.5. Drawing conclusions.
- 1.5.6. How to determine author's purpose and audience.

1.6. Reading for a variety of purposes.

The elementary teacher understands:

- 1.6.1. Reading for pleasure.
- 1.6.2. Reading for information.
- 1.6.3. Study and research skills.
- 1.6.4. Ability of children to respond to literature.

In addition to these strong regulations concerning teacher preparation in the area of reading, the following 1999 legislation is pending strengthening teacher preparation in reading:

“The Commissioner of Education shall appoint a Teacher Preparation Program Committee for the purpose of establishing core curricula in each state-approved teacher preparation program. The committee shall be comprised of representatives from presidents of public and private colleges and universities, deans of colleges of education, presidents of community colleges, district school superintendents, and high performing teachers. The curricula shall be focused on the knowledge, skills, and abilities essential to instruction in the Sunshine State Standards, with a clear emphasis on the importance of reading at all grade levels....The State Board shall adopt rules that establish uniform core curricula for each state approved teacher preparation program and shall utilize this report in the development of such rules.” (PCS/HB's 751, 753 & 755)

Although Florida's strong requirements related to teacher preparation have and will continue to impact on new teachers entering Florida schools, many new teachers are recruited from or come from teacher preparation programs outside the state. Most teachers currently teaching in Florida classrooms were trained prior to the new regulations or come from out of state. Inservice training programs designed and

MAY 6, 1999

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

operated by local school districts and the regional Area Centers for Educational Enhancement impact on the skills and knowledge of these teachers.

Through the **FLaRE** Initiative, Florida will initiate additional preservice and inservice teacher preparation activities designed to prepare teachers in all the major components of reading instruction (including phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension). These activities are described more fully in previous sections of the proposal.

- ◆ **Staff Development Program on Reading and Family Literacy.** The DOE, Human Resources Development unit will create a staff development program designed specifically to address reading and family literacy that incorporates all the major components of reading instruction (including phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension).
- ◆ **Textbook Adoption Specifications** - Specifications for the next adoption of reading textbooks will be aligned with the components of an effective, balanced reading program..
- ◆ **Preservice and Inservice Courses in Reading Research.** The DOE will compile syllabus, annotated bibliography, and course documentation for use at the preservice and inservice levels to train new teachers and returning teachers on the body of knowledge reflected in scientifically based reading and family literacy research.
- ◆ **Reading Resource Collection.** The Department will develop a Reading and Family Literacy Resource Collection containing scientifically-based reading and family literacy research articles, documents, descriptions of programs with proven evidence of effectiveness, and preview copies of program materials and documents.

These activities will ensure a coordinated retooling of preservice and currently practicing teachers in Florida on the need for and consistent use of all of the major components of reading instruction including phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension.

MAY 6, 1999
FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

Part IV

Florida's Reading Excellence Grant

**Compliance with General Education Provisions Act (GEPA),
Section 427**

The Florida Department of Education has determined that no student, teacher or other beneficiary will be denied access to or participation in the programs, services, and activities of this federal program due to his or her gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. The State of Florida's Auditor General's Office annually monitors programs for equal access compliance.

Funding spent at state-level for Florida's Reading Excellence Program is to be implemented with the assurance that all efforts will be made to provide equal access to services offered. Furthermore, the Florida Reading Excellence Program will ensure the quality of its efforts with regard to equitable access and participation in all district projects, by requiring that they include in their implementation plan, based upon local circumstances and needs, a brief explanation of how they provide equal opportunity for serving all populations, and solutions to any barriers they may foresee in their projects relating to:

- ◆ Minority populations
- ◆ Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students
- ◆ Students At-Risk of dropping out of school
- ◆ Special Needs/Disabilities populations
- ◆ Other

MAY 6, 1999
FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT APPLICATION

PART V

FLORIDA'S READING EXCELLENCE GRANT

ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Assurances – Non-Construction programs

Certifications regarding Lobbying; Debarment; Suspension and Other responsibility Matters; and drug-free Workplace Requirements

Certification regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion – Lower Tier Covered Transactions

Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, if needed.